

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Behind the vote on
Proposition 187

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 58/NO. 45 DECEMBER 19, 1994

Cuban youth host Young Socialists on speaking tour

BY LAURA GARZA

HAVANA, Cuba — "What is it like being a socialist in the United States? How do you work? What does your organization do?" These were some of the questions young Cuban workers and students asked two members of the Young Socialists who began a three-week speaking tour of Cuba December 5.

The two Young Socialists, Naomi Craine and Brian Taylor, are speaking about the conditions facing working people in the United States and the resistance there to the employers' drive against workers' wages, working conditions, and democratic rights.

Taylor is a 21-year-old railroad worker from Chicago who first became active in politics in Cincinnati, Ohio, when he and others organized protests against the U.S. government's bombing of Iraq in 1991. Craine, 24, was a textile worker in North Carolina before volunteering for a stint as a staffwriter for the *Militant*.

The Union of Young Communists (UJC) is hosting the tour. The UJC has arranged an itinerary that includes speaking engagements on campuses and in factories and other workplaces in Havana province and

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Washington faces crisis over NATO, Bosnia war

BY GREG ROSENBERG

A sharp rift has emerged between Washington and the government of Russia over the future of the NATO military alliance and the war in Bosnia. At the same time, the U.S. government and its imperialist partners in London, Paris, and Bonn have launched into an increasingly open feud over their conflicting interests in the three-year slaughter in the Balkans, which has left more than 200,000 people dead or missing. The conflicts threaten to shatter NATO.

Washington has pressed to assert its weight in Europe in order to stake out its interests, both against its imperialist rivals and against its biggest potential military opponent, Russia. It has yet to be demonstrated that capitalism can be reestablished in Russia. A continued NATO alliance under Washington's dominance is both a beachhead and a bulwark against political instability and economic crisis there.

The Clinton administration has carried out an abrupt about-face in its failed policy toward Bosnia. From urging bombing runs against forces fighting the Bosnian army in the hope they would cease their offensives, the administration has now backed off. The troops fighting under the command of Radovan Karadzic in Bosnia are making continued advances on the ground, and all



Troops allied with Belgrade regime target Bihac with 120-mm mortar. Sharply conflicting interests between imperialists have come to fore in the Bosnia war.

overtures and limited actions against them have yielded no results.

Deep rifts with London, Paris, and Moscow have prevented Washington from embarking on another course. The British and

French governments are now pressing for a withdrawal of troops — mostly their own — under the United Nations flag in Bosnia.

Sharp differences over administration policy on the Bosnia war have emerged among capitalist politicians in the United States. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, urged the withdrawal of UN troops from Bosnia and the arming and training of Bosnian government forces by Washington. Gingrich called for threatening a massive bombing in the former Yugoslavia. "I would do it like Desert Storm and I would do it like 1972...when Nixon used B-52s against North Vietnam," said Gingrich, who is third in line to the presidency.

Rebukes of the Clinton administration also took place at the summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which was attended by representatives of more than 50 governments December 5-6 in Budapest. The meeting exploded into conflict over NATO and Bosnia.

Russian president Boris Yeltsin lashed out at Washington's plan to expand the military alliance to include Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, while excluding Russia. He accused NATO governments of trying to split Europe. "Why are you sowing the seeds of mistrust?" Yeltsin asked. "Europe is in danger of plunging into a cold peace."

Yeltsin warned that "history demonstrates that it is a dangerous illusion to suppose that the destinies of continents and of the world community in general can somehow be managed from one single capital," an oblique reference to Washington.

U.S. president Bill Clinton, who had planned his summit attendance to showcase his foreign policy, insisted that "no country outside [NATO] will be allowed to veto expansion."

Yeltsin's outburst followed a December 1 speech by Russian foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev to a meeting of NATO foreign ministers. Kozyrev stunned the diplomats by refusing to sign new agreements on NATO that called for a "special" dialogue with Moscow. "This communiqué raises more questions than it answers," Kozyrev charged. "We have to understand what are the intentions."

A NATO official said Kozyrev's re-

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Protest marks India gas leak

Thousands of people marched in Bhopal, India, December 3 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of a poisonous gas leak at the Union Carbide plant. Others participated in a partial strike in memory of the 7,000 people who were killed by the December 1984 disaster — one of the most deadly industrial accidents in history. Protest organizers demanded that former Union Carbide chairman Warren Anderson be brought to India and tried for mass murder. Abdul Jabbar, a leader of a group of victims of the leak, accused local authorities of arresting some 11,000 people from the surrounding cities and towns to keep them from participating in the protest. The home secretary of Madhya Pradesh, the state that includes Bhopal, said that some arrests had been made but denied they had anything to do with the demonstration.

In an out-of-court settlement in 1989, Connecticut-based Union Carbide paid \$470 million in damages — less than one-tenth of the Indian government's original claim. But only a third of this money has been distributed and more than 300,000 victims of the leak are still awaiting payment. An additional provision of the claim guaranteeing the company immunity from prosecution was struck down by India's supreme court. Eight officials of Union Carbide's Indian subsidiary were subsequently charged with manslaughter. None have been brought to trial.

Tokyo protests U.S. stamp celebrating atomic bombing

The Japanese government is protesting U.S. Postal Service plans to issue a stamp bearing a full-color portrait of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the caption "Atomic bombs hasten war's end, August 1945." The stamp is planned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

"Beneath that mushroom cloud, hundreds of thousands of noncombatant women and children were killed or injured.... The atomic blast was a case of indiscriminate massacre," Hiroyoshi Moto-shima, the mayor of Nagasaki, said. Postal officials defended the decision.



Marking the 10th anniversary of one of the worst industrial disasters, thousands demonstrated in the streets of Bhopal, India, with an effigy of former Union Carbide chairman Warren Anderson. Victims demand the return and trial for mass murder of the former chief executive. More than 300,000 survivors have still not been compensated.

U.S. Navy halts ships near Iraq

The U.S. Navy boarded five ships it accused of disregarding United Nations sanctions against Iraq. A naval spokesperson said three ships were intercepted and diverted to nearby ports November 30 as they sailed south from Iraq carrying 23,000 tons of gasoline. The two other vessels, including a tanker, were stopped the following day 15 miles off the Iraqi coast. According to a navy spokesperson, "minimum force" was used to subdue and handcuff four of the crewmen on the tanker who the U.S. military forces deemed were being "uncooperative." The Iraqi government reported that the U.S. sailors shot at the crewmen before forcing the two ships to sail south for inspection. It condemned "This unjustified American military aggression."

The two ships stopped on December 1 were released after the tanker was found to

be carrying water. The UN sanctions have been in place since August 1990. They have caused widespread hunger and disease among working people in Iraq.

Unions in Italy cancel strike

Labor union officials in Italy agreed to cancel a December 2 general strike that had been scheduled to protest government budget cuts. In the largest demonstration since World War II, 1 million workers had rallied in Rome November 12 against the plans to cut pensions and health care. Under the compromise, the government agreed to postpone long-term structural changes to early retirement pensions until next June and ease penalties for nonpayment of social security contributions. The unions agreed to allow the minimum retirement age to increase to 65 for men and 60 for women by the year 2000.

Swiss anti-immigrant law passed

An anti-immigrant referendum giving the government sweeping new powers to search, arrest, and detain asylum seekers and others was approved by a 3-1 margin in December 4 elections in Switzerland. The law is supposedly aimed at combating drug dealing. The number of people requesting asylum in Switzerland has risen from fewer than 10,000 a year in the mid-1980s to more than 41,000 in 1991.

La Paz to give away industries

Bolivian president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada is pushing a plan to give away six major government-owned enterprises to international investors. The six enterprises include the petroleum, electricity, and telecommunications companies; the gov-

ernment's largest smelter; its railroad system, and its national airline. The investors would receive half-ownership in each company at no cost in exchange for a commitment to invest in the modernization of the enterprises. The other half-ownership would be transferred to a special fund, supposedly to provide pensions for Bolivian workers.

Most union members, however, oppose the plan. Many have participated in protests against it.

Antiabortion thug sentenced

Antiabortion thug Paul Hill was sentenced to two life sentences December 2. Hill was convicted in federal court a month ago on charges of murdering Dr. John Britton and volunteer escort James Barret outside a Pensacola, Florida, clinic.

Hill will be sentenced in mid-December on state murder charges. Hill was the first person in the nation to be prosecuted under the Federal law against using violence or interfering with those entering abortion clinics.

Clinton retreats on gay ouster

The Clinton administration announced November 28 that it would drop its efforts to bar a gay sailor from serving in the navy and would not appeal the case to the Supreme Court. Government attorneys said the decision, in the case of Petty Officer Keith Meinhold, was not intended to convey the message that the military must admit homosexuals but was instead a tactical decision since the law under which Meinhold was charged is no longer in effect.

The government has tried to discharge Meinhold since a 1992 television interview in which he said he was gay. The military has told Meinhold that he could be disciplined under new regulations if he repeats his statement that he is gay.

Ruling against Joseph Steffan in mid-November, the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia upheld the right of the government to impose restrictions on the rights of gays who want to serve in the military.

Court ends school voucher plan

The Supreme Court in Puerto Rico struck down a school voucher program that had given some \$2.7 million to more than 2,000 private school students this year, saying it violated Puerto Rico's constitution.

The November 30 ruling was in response to a lawsuit filed by the Teachers Association, which represents 27,000 public school teachers in Puerto Rico. Under the program, the government paid a secular or religious private school \$1,500 toward the cost of educating a student whose family earned less than \$18,000 a year.

The "law intended to disguise as free school choice the beginning of privatization and the elimination of public education," José Vélez, president of the association, said.

—SARA LOBMAN

THE MILITANT

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The Militant

Vol. 58/No. 45

Closing news date: December 8, 1994

Editor: GEORGE FYSON

Managing Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Business Manager: NAOMI CRAINE

Editorial Staff: Naomi Craine, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Sara Lobman, Paul Mailhot, Greg Rosenberg, Pat Smith, Maurice Williams. Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311.2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant. Internet email: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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South African union leader and political activists address meetings in New York

BY GREG ROSENBERG

NEW YORK — "Parliament can pass legislation, but it can't change the country," said Connie September, first vice president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) at a meeting here December 3. "We have to involve the masses of the people in making change."

September was speaking at an event sponsored by the American Committee on Africa entitled "Overcoming the Legacy of Apartheid: A workshop for activists." The gathering was cosponsored by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). Joining September on the speakers' panel were Lechesa Tsenoli, president of the South African National Civic Organization (SANCO), and journalist Hein Marais. Several dozen political activists and members of the staffs of ACTWU and other unions attended the meeting.

'The people aren't governing yet'

"At a national level we have a Government of National Unity," September told about 30 people at a reception at the hospital workers Local 1199 union hall a day earlier. But South Africa's first nonracial elections "did not mean absolute freedom just by making a cross in the ballot box. Low wages didn't stop. Villages without water haven't got fountains all of a sudden. The changes in the next three to five years, until the next [national] elections, are crucial," she added. "The people aren't governing yet in South Africa. It's going to be a long process."

At the workshop, September said, "We must accept the idea that the African National Congress is not in power — it is in government."

The COSATU leader remarked that the union federation had been "branded" by employer organizations and the media recently over a wave of strikes that spread across South Africa between June and September.

They charged that militant action by workers to change their conditions and improve living standards would compromise the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) by scaring away investment. COSATU groups 1.3 million workers through its affiliates.

At the workshop, September said, "Even our own labor leaders who have gone into government are talking about fiscal disci-

pline. They are constrained because they are in a Government of National Unity.... Internationally, financial institutions and governments are saying to them, 'You'd better tone down this little monster COSATU.'"

September pointed out that widespread struggles are taking place on the shop floor and in the streets. She emphasized that this would be a key component of changes in the immediate future. September also reported that National Union of Mineworkers leaders have suggested that brigades be organized to help build housing.

Hein Marais, who edited the magazine *Work in Progress* until it ceased publication earlier this year, stated that while South Africa faced "a completely new situation, there is very little change, and there are signs of economic regression." He cited a recent study that found that the richest 10 percent of the population takes more than half the national income, while the poorest 40 percent gets only 4 percent.

Marais argued that the organizations that made up the democratic movement now face "a series of constraints" flowing from the government setup, in which the ANC holds a majority, and the National Party and Inkatha Freedom Party both hold substantial minorities. "The notion of conflict to resolve differences has been dropped," the journalist stated. "The RDP stopped being the product of the popular movement and has become that of the National Party, business, and so on." He said there was "intense



Panelists at December 3 meeting on 'The legacy of apartheid.' From left: journalist Hein Marais; South African union leader Connie September; and civic leader Lechesa Tsenoli.

pressure" to retreat from the original demands in the RDP.

SANCO leader Tsenoli took exception to Marais's statement that the RDP had been appropriated by business and government officials, arguing that it still embodied mass demands for housing, land, and other social improvements.

"Not all those in government are from the progressive ranks," Tsenoli said. "What's emerging in ministries constitutes

a failure to win them all over on the issues in the RDP."

Tsenoli emphasized the importance of local government elections in October 1995. "Our ability to vote will be useless unless we can transform the socio-economic reality," he said.

Both Tsenoli and September emphasized the importance of continuing international support for the fight to transform South Africa.

Students in Iran protest government austerity policies, soaring inflation

BY SARA LOBMAN

Students and others in Iran have begun protesting government austerity policies and the effects of soaring inflation on the standard of living of workers and peasants. Prices on some food items have risen more than 4,000 percent since March.

During a demonstration in November at the University of Tehran commemorating the 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy, some 500 students denounced government officials for favoring the wealthy over working people and the poor. The protesters chanted, "Free market economic policies must be corrected. The system must help the poor."

In October, 800 students marched against legislation that would have required them to pay if they failed a course, although there is no tuition at the university. After the protest, Parliament voted down the bill.

Also in October, a group of 134 novel-

ists, publishers, and translators signed a public appeal for an end to government censorship. Retired army general Azizollah Amir Rahimi, who became head of the Tehran military police after the shah's overthrow in 1979, also called for a halt to censorship and for the government to resign.

Those demonstrating against government policies have been sharply rebuked by the Rafsanjani regime. He criticized student protesters as immature and seditious, accusing them of "capitalizing on people's discontent."

The protests come as the government of President Hashemi Rafsanjani is trying to place the burden of a staggering economic crisis onto the shoulders of working people. Oil exports, which in 1992 amounted to \$18 billion — 90 percent of Iran's hard currency earnings — are projected at just \$10 billion this year. In February, the government rescheduled \$8 billion of its more

than \$20 billion debt. For the first time since the 1979 revolution, beggars are seen on the streets of Tehran.

The government sharply increased the price of state-run services in March. This included a rise of 60 percent for telecommunications, 100 percent for gas, and 300 percent for electricity. Domestic and foreign airfare also jumped 100 percent. In addition, Rafsanjani lifted subsidies on raw materials to industries, and more recently on sugar and cooking oil. The price of those commodities immediately jumped more than 2,000 percent.

Parliament, however, fearing further protests, has vetoed a number of belt-tightening measures. In early 1994, the legislative body rejected a government proposal for an increase in the price of gasoline. In October, it voted down another proposal to cut subsidies on food and medicine, which guarantee every Iranian basic necessities at low prices.

ANC conference set for December 17-21

A statement released to the press by African National Congress secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa reports that the theme of the 49th national ANC conference will be "From Resistance to Reconstruction and Nation Building." The gathering will take place December 17-21 in the city of Bloemfontein, where the ANC was founded in 1912.

Some 3,000 delegates are expected to attend. Ninety percent of the delegates will be direct representatives of ANC branches throughout South Africa. The other delegates will come from the ANC's national leadership structures and those of the ANC Women's League and ANC Youth League.

Observer delegations will include 42 members of national and provincial parliaments, and 10 observers each from the South African Communist Party, South African National Civic Organization, and Congress of South African Trade Unions.

The opening address will be delivered by South African and ANC president Nelson Mandela. The commissions to be convened by delegates include: "Characterization of the current stage of the democratic revolution," "Transformation of the economy," "Transformation of the State Machinery," "Building the ANC," "The land and agrarian question," "Constitution-making process," "Emancipation of women," "Youth empowerment and development," "Stabilization of the country," and "South Africa in the New World Order."

Militant reporters will be on the scene to write firsthand coverage of the conference.

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Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

HEAR: Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party
Michel Prairie, editor, *Nouvelle Internationale*
George Fyson, editor, *The Militant*

Cuban Workers & Farmers Defend Their Socialist Revolution: A First-Hand Account

Talks by participants in the November 1994 World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba held in Havana and the December Young Socialists speaking tour in Cuba

HEAR: Mary-Alice Waters, editor, *New Internationalist*
Argiris Malapanis, managing editor, *The Militant*
Naomi Craine, Young Socialists leader

Eyewitness Report-Back from South Africa

Talks by observers at the December 1994 National Conference of the African National Congress

HEAR: Steve Clark, editor, *Nelson Mandela Speaks*
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Youth sign up to join brigade to Cuba

BY SARA LOBMAN

"I've been against the U.S. embargo of Cuba for a while because I knew it was hurting people there. So it seemed like a great idea to go to Cuba with other people and see firsthand what it's like," Lorena Gaibor explained in a recent interview. Gaibor, a student at Middlesex County College in New Jersey, will be joining young people from the United States, Britain, Iceland, and other countries on an international youth brigade to Cuba.

She will be traveling there as a reporter for the *Caellian*, a student paper at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The brigade will be in Cuba January 6-20. Participants, who will all be reporting on the trip for different media, will spend a week in the countryside outside of Havana. They'll meet with Cuban youth there who are part of the campaign to increase food production. They'll also spend five days in Havana visiting an AIDS sanatorium, the new farmers markets, the Museum of the Revolution, and other places.

'We have to change things here'

Gaibor first found out about the brigade on the bus ride to Washington, D.C., to participate in a November 12 protest against U.S. government policy toward Cuba. "I don't know exactly how yet, but I know we have to change things here. That's why I'm a revolutionary and why I want to learn more about the Cuban revolution," she said. Gaibor and other brigade participants from New Jersey and New York organized a raffle at a recent Militant Labor Forum in Newark, New Jersey, to help raise funds for the trip. More than \$160 was collected. A big holiday dinner fund-raiser is planned for December 23.

Ken Riley, a volunteer working to build the brigade, reports that checks to cover the initial \$250 deposit for the trip are arriving in New York from across the United

States and from other countries, as well. "Six people in Los Angeles are going on the brigade," Riley reported. "And people have signed up from Washington, D.C.; Cleveland; Des Moines, Iowa; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Houston; Vermont; and Seattle, among other places."

Anwar Ravjani, a student at South Banks University in London, is also doing some fund-raising. Ravjani, who found out about the brigade during a recent demonstration against education cutbacks in London, reports that at least three people will be participating from the United Kingdom.

"I didn't know anything about Cuba until I started reading to get ready for the brigade," he said. "And a lot of people I know also have questions. So I'm asking them to sponsor me. They'll make a donation for the trip and I'll take a list of questions they have about Cuba and try to get them answered."

Ravjani has been reading several pamphlets by Ernesto Che Guevara to get ready for the trip. "They're really incredible," he said. He plans to write several articles for the student union paper at the university.

"There are four people from Philadelphia who are going on the brigade," Seth Oberman reported. Oberman and two of the other participants are students at Tem-



Protest against U.S. embargo of Cuba November 12 in Washington, D.C. Brigade organizers spread the word about the trip among young people there, and many signed up for more information.

ple University. He first found out about the brigade when he got a flier on it outside a meeting for a representative from the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. "But I really got inspired at the November 12 demonstration," he said. I

decided I wanted to go to Cuba to see it for myself so I could better mobilize people against the embargo and in support of the revolution."

Big fund-raising effort

Oberman and others in Philadelphia have put together a committee to help raise funds for the brigade. Brian Miller, who is part of the committee, says their plans include raffling off a lithograph print donated by a local artist, a big fund-raising party, and a showing of a video of the November 12 demonstration.

"We're also approaching all different kinds of groups — women's organizations, gay rights groups, antiracist groups, and so on — to ask for contributions."

The committee has been given time to announce the brigade at a meeting featuring Albertina Sisulu, a longtime leader of the African National Congress.

Oberman is planning to videotape the trip so he can share his experiences when he returns. "I can't even express how excited I am about going on the brigade. Cuba's the only place in the world with a government that represents workers and farmers,"

he concluded, urging other young people to sign up for the trip. "It should be supported."

For more information contact: Cuba Youth Brigade, P.O. Box 1801, New York, N.Y. 10009. Telephone: (212) 677-4356.

— YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD —

YS leader from New York tours Iceland, Sweden

Young Socialists \$16,000 Travel Fund

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Sydney	\$505	\$270
CANADA		
Montreal	\$250	
Toronto	\$600	
ICELAND		
Stockholm	\$250	\$120
TOTAL	\$12,850	\$2,225
SHOULD BE	\$16,000	

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists, an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS or to join, write: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 2396, New York, NY 10009, or call (212) 475-6482.

BY OLAFUR GUDESTAIN AND FRIDRIK ATLASON

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Diana Newberry, a leader of the Young Socialists from the United States, visited here November 9-15 on a speaking tour organized by a group of students interested in finding out more about socialism.

Newberry spoke with 200 youth, aged 16-20, at five different schools.

She was invited to one school by an anthropology teacher to speak on racism. The Young Socialists leader said the ruling rich use racism to divide workers and youth so they can maintain their system of profits and exploitation of workers worldwide. Newberry based her talk on the issue of *International Socialist Review* with the article on "The Myth of Race," which explains the scientific origins of racism.

In other schools she spoke about the Young Socialists and how youth are building an organization to fight back against the attacks of the capitalist class in their drive to push down workers in the midst of a depression. "As the crisis of the capitalist system deepens, so will the attacks on immigrants, women, and minorities," Newberry said. "We must organize and link up with workers and young people around the world in the fight against this capitalist offensive."

In one class, an exchange student from Germany asked, "How does the YS fight against fascism, such as the fascist gangs in Germany?" Another student asked, "If the Cuban revolution is the example for all workers and youth around the world, why are thousands of Cubans leaving on rafts to Miami?" Many students were interested in the international youth brigade to Cuba in January. Three students signed up to go.

On November 13, Newberry spoke at

the Militant Labor Forum, held at the Pathfinder Bookstore, which had just reopened after being shut down for three weeks of reconstruction. Twenty-five people attended the forum and 20 students from various schools signed up to find out more about the Young Socialists and the activities they will be involved in.

The following day, the seven young people who joined the Young Socialists held their first meeting and decided to organize a class on *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Che Guevara, which has been translated into Icelandic by Pathfinder Press. They also decided to use the *Militant* in their schools to help carry out political discussions on what is happening in the world, and are fund-raising to send someone from Iceland on the brigade to Cuba.

Olafur Gudestein and Fridrik Atlason are members of the YS in Iceland.

BY LARS JOHANSSON AND CATHARINA TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Young Socialists leader Diana Newberry recently ended a week-long tour here, where she had the opportunity to meet with young fighters looking for an alternative to what capitalism has to offer.

After her visit several young people decided to form a Young Socialists group in Sweden. Five people joined the YS and set as one of their goals participating in the upcoming January 6-20 international youth brigade to Cuba.

At Kungsholmen high school, Newberry spoke at a classroom meeting organized by two students. About 25 students spent their lunch break in an intense discussion about the Cuban revolution, interrupted only by the end of the break, when most of them had to go back to classes. "The Cuban revolution is the biggest political question that we always discuss at this school," said one of the initiators of the meeting.

The two organizers took Newberry to a cafe run by the Young Left, the youth organization of the Left Party in Sweden, and spent the afternoon discussing issues like

the fight for abortion rights and gay and lesbian rights, while waiting to attend a political meeting on pornography. Newberry introduced herself as a member of the YS at the beginning of that meeting.

Newberry was part of a sales table at Vasalund High School, organized by a student here who is interested in building the Young Socialists and going to Cuba on the January youth brigade. He had lived in Cuba for a short time before. Later that afternoon she went to the Goman Shark meat-processing plant in Stockholm, where she was introduced to young workers.

Five tables at high schools, two political meetings, and countless informal discussions led up to a November 19 Militant Labor Forum in Stockholm, which Newberry spoke at. The meeting was a rally for the Swedish-Cuban Friendship Association to oppose the embargo of Cuba. A *Militant* subscription, a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and two copies of the Swedish-language *Ny International* were purchased from a literature table at the event.

Twenty-five people attended the public forum. Several youth showed up before the meeting to talk to the Young Socialists leader.

"There might not be a big social movement in Sweden at this moment, but by building an international revolutionary socialist organization you can be part of the fight to defend the Cuban revolution and prepare for the struggles that are coming ahead, together with other young people around the world," Newberry explained.

Several participants asked questions about the Young Socialists and politics in the United States. Questions included: "Do fascist groups or the Klu Klux Klan exist in Los Angeles?" and "How do we build the Young Socialists in Sweden?"

"Aren't you impatient now, when there are no revolutions in the world as you say, and you want to take power?" asked an older worker participating at the meeting.

"Only a massive social movement can take power out of the hands of the bosses," Newberry said. "But what we are doing is helping to build that movement now by going out and taking part in politics today."

Washington to grant entry to some Cubans

BY HILDA CUZCO

The Clinton administration announced December 2 it will drop its policy of denying direct entry to the 32,000 Cubans being detained on U.S. military bases in Panama and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Children and parents in these detention camps will be granted asylum on what Washington calls "humanitarian" grounds.

At the same time, the White House has made it clear that, despite an immigration agreement reached in September, its trade embargo and other hostile policies against the Cuban revolution will continue.

A few weeks ago the U.S. administration had said it would allow entry to up to 8,000 children and parents whom it had initially required to return to Cuba to apply for admission. Currently there are about 24,000 Cubans detained at Guantánamo and 8,000 in Panama. More than 400 unaccompanied children, elderly, and sick refugees have been admitted since October.

In her December 2 written statement, Attorney General Janet Reno said Washington would consider releasing the children from the camps on a case-by-case basis along with "such immediate family members as humanitarian needs required," that is, at a slower pace than indicated earlier. Only children "for whom long-term presence in the safe havens at Guantánamo and Panama would constitute extraordinary hardship" will be allowed into the United States at this time, she stated.

The White House waited until after the elections to make this move to avoid unnecessary problems during the electoral campaign. Democratic governor Lawton Chiles of Florida, who was reelected in November, bragged during his campaign about his alleged success in keeping thousands of Cuban refugees away from Florida in previous months. As part of his anti-immigrant campaign, Chiles has sued the federal government to get reimbursed for the costs of so-called illegal immigra-

tion into Florida.

The extended detention of tens of thousands of unhappy and protesting Cubans has increasingly tarnished Washington's image without providing many foreign-policy advantages. With the return of all 32,000 back to Cuba unlikely and problematic, the White House faced little choice but to begin to admit some of the detainees, using a "humanitarian" cover and pretending to respond to pressure from Cuban-Americans.

Cubans in the Guantánamo and Panama detention camps have held hunger strikes, rioted, and organized mass escapes. In early November, a group of 85 broke out of the Guantánamo camp but more than half were recaptured and put in administrative detention. The other 39 jumped off a 40-foot cliff, swam a mile, avoided minefields, and reached Cuban territory.

Nearly 1,000 Cubans have demanded to go back to Cuba. More than 80 Cubans have already voluntarily returned, while the departure of others has been delayed by court rulings and other red tape in the United States.

Elsa Quintero, disgusted with a lawsuit — introduced by a group of Cuban-American attorneys from Miami — that barred them from returning, exclaimed, "We don't want attorneys. Attorneys should go in the sea with the sharks. If they don't let us go, we are going to die in the sea. It is our decision to go back to Cuba."

Trying to recover lost credibility, right-wing Cuban-American groups have been campaigning for the release of the detained refugees. They are currently raising millions of dollars to privately finance the resettlement of the 8,000 children and parents. As anger among Cuban-American working people grew over the incarceration of their relatives under appalling conditions, the rightist businessmen had become somewhat discredited by their close



Cuban at Guantánamo detention camp protests conditions with sign in Spanish that reads, "Our detention is immoral, unjust, and illegal."

alignment with Washington's detention policy. The Cuban-American groups also offered to pay for the 1,500 Haitian children who are being held in detention camps in Guantánamo. The White House, however, has appealed a November ruling by a federal judge that the Haitian children be allowed into the United States in the same way as the Cuban youth.

Washington's relations with Cuba have not improved since the two governments signed an immigration accord September 9. At that time, the U.S. government agreed to grant 20,000 visas each year for Cubans who wish to emigrate to the United States.

This agreement undercut the momentum of a series of hostile and provocative moves the U.S. government had launched against Cuba in August, including the Guantánamo detention camps and barring travel and money transfers by Cuban-Americans to Cuba. The pretext for these actions was the wave of Cubans in July and August who tried to reach the United States through hijacked boats or home-made rafts.

During the talks, the U. S. government refused to discuss its economic embargo

against Cuba. To bolster the trade ban by not appearing to violate "the free flow of information," Washington made a few small moves in recent weeks. One was the authorization of direct-dial telephone service to the island, which began November 25.

White House officials also floated the idea of improving mail service, authorizing U.S. news organizations to set up bureaus in Cuba, and allowing Cuban reporters to work in the United States. They also raised the possibility of easing travel to the island by U.S. academics, which the Clinton administration restricted in August.

In recent days, however, the White House has sharpened its hostile statements against Cuba, demanding that the revolutionary government make political and economic concessions before Washington considers easing the embargo. "Our position is that Fidel has to take the first step now," a State Department official said.

What is that first step? The Cuban government must move "to open up the island's politics and economy," according to U.S. officials cited in the December 5 *New York Times*.

The big-business paper complained, "Cuban leaders have insisted that they will never change their political system to meet conditions that the United States chooses not to set on its relationships with Communist countries like China and Vietnam."

The article added, "The hopes of American officials that new free markets for farm products and other items in Cuba might portend broader changes by President Fidel Castro are starting to dissolve." As a result, one unnamed Clinton administration official told the *Times*, "Things will get nastier before they get better."

Youth brigade builds in Minnesota

BY JON HILLSON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — "I'm going to Cuba to create a connection between young people there and in the United States," said Jamil Salaam, a 22-year-old University of Minnesota student and a member of the Africana Student Cultural Center, as he explained his participation in the upcoming international youth brigade to Cuba.

Salaam is among eight young activists from Minnesota working on fund-raising. The youth, traveling as accredited journalists, will report on their experiences in Cuba upon their return from the January 6-20 trip. Several of these youth, including Salaam, attended a Militant Labor Forum here December 3. Damon Tinnon, a national leader of the Young Socialists, gave an eyewitness account of the November 21-25 World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba in Havana, of 3,000 people.

It proved, Tinnon said, "that Cuba is not alone." The international youth brigade, "is based on that fact, that there is a new generation of young fighters who want to know more about Cuba, see it with their own eyes, and defend its revolution in what ever country they come from, as part of any struggle they are engaged in."

Meagan Arny, a 25-year-old student from the University of Minnesota who also attended the forum, explained that she wants to "get back into action" by going to Cuba. "In school, you get more theory," she noted, and now, "I'm ready for a change." Arny will write on her experiences for the *Minnesota Daily*, the student newspaper at the University of Minnesota.

Two members of the Minnesota contingent are leaders of the La Raza Student Cultural Center at the University of Minnesota. They will report on their trip for *The Circle*, an area journal that reports on Native American and Latino community issues.

"This is a diverse group," said Lisa Rotach, who is helping to organize the Minneapolis-St. Paul contingent. "And that's our goal, to get all kinds of different young people from different backgrounds,

with different ideas, to come together to go to Cuba, and return to tell the truth about it.

Also speaking at the forum was Adriana Sanchez, an activist on the University of Minnesota-based Faculty Student Cuban Lectures Committee. The group is coordinating a national effort to bring Rogelio Polanco and Kenia Serrano, two Cuban

youth leaders, to speak on campus throughout the United States. The U.S. government makes it hard for "us to go to Cuba," Sanchez said, "so we are trying to bring Cuba to the United States."

Jon Hillson is a member of the United Transportation Union in St. Paul.

Faculty-student group plans Cuba youth tour

BY RYAN KELLY

MINNEAPOLIS — A second Cuban youth leader, Kenia Serrano Puig, 21, will be joining Rogelio Polanco, 28, in a national speaking tour of the United States from March 1 to April 15. The announcement was made here by the Faculty-Student Cuban Youth Lectures Committee, which is organizing the tour.

Serrano is an associate researcher at the Center for Studies of Youth in Havana. The center does research and provides information on the situation facing Cuban youth, particularly regarding employment, education, and culture.

A native of Las Tunas province, she was president of the Federation of High School Students there in 1986-89. She was later

elected president of the University Students Federation (FEU) at the University of Las Tunas and served in that capacity until 1993.

While at the university, Serrano helped lead student mobilizations to carry out voluntary labor in agriculture and other economic priorities. During her studies in Las Tunas, she also displayed great interest in scientific research and innovation. She presented a paper at the Seventh Forum on Spare Parts that won her an award. Such forums, which have brought together workers, farmers, technicians, and scientists to design and retrofit spare parts, are part of the efforts to mobilize the creativity and determination of Cuban working people in meeting the country's economic challenges.

Serrano is currently completing a major in English language studies at the Enrique José Varona Teaching Institute in Havana. She has taken on national responsibilities for the University Students Federation and is presently the secretary of international relations of the FEU. Serrano is also a member of the Union of Young Communists.

Earlier in 1994, the lectures committee organized a speaking tour of another Cuban youth leader, Pável Díaz. The U.S. State Department delayed issuing the visas for him and Arleen Rodríguez Derivet, who had also been invited to be part of the tour. After a broad letter-writing campaign by academic figures and organizations, Díaz won the visa. Rodríguez, however, was not granted one.

The lectures committee has set a goal of

obtaining more than 60 letters of invitation. Several letters have already arrived from Utah and Minnesota.



Rogelio Polanco

Those interested in helping to organize meetings in their areas to hear Serrano and Polanco or to send an invitation letter can contact: The Faculty-Student Cuban Youth Lectures Committee, Latin American Studies, 214 Social Sciences Tower, 267 19th Avenue South, University of Minnesota, MN 55455; telephone: (612) 624-1512; fax: (612) 626-2242.

Ryan Kelly is a member of the Young Socialists in St. Paul, Minnesota.



Kenia Serrano Puig

California county files bankruptcy

BY GREG ROSENBERG

In one of the largest single investment tumbles ever, Orange County, California, has lost at least \$1.5 billion through its investment fund. The fifth largest county in the United States — and one of the wealthiest — filed for bankruptcy protection on December 6.

Losses may shoot up to \$3 billion when the dust settles. The plunge threatens the functioning of entire school, transportation and water districts, and pension funds in southern California.

The debacle forced a nervous panic on Wall Street, where shaken big-money investors sent the blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial average plummeting 30 points on early news of the bankruptcy and threw the municipal bond market into chaos. It is by far the largest bankruptcy case involving a unit of government in the United States.

The county and dozens of government units within it held more than 90 percent of investments in the fund. The Newport-Mesa Unified School District, for example, borrowed \$47 million in June, which it tossed into the Orange County fund. That equals more than half its annual budget.

County officials reported schools, parks, and libraries may face immediate cuts.

Southern California school districts had poured more than \$1 billion into the fund; water districts more than half a billion dollars. The Orange County Employees Retirement System sunk \$133 million of its money into the bet. Some 37 cities plunked in a combined total of more than \$1 billion.

"What is a school district doing in risk arbitrage?" remarked the head of one county investment firm. "I don't know how they're going to make up the losses."

Debt load and interest rates

The answer to the question lies in the mushrooming prices of debt-financed paper values that have built up over the past 15 years. As big business found it could not get satisfactory profit rates in manufacturing, investors shifted vast amounts of capital to the stock and bond markets, with the appearance of easy money.

Barron's, the Wall Street weekly, called the Orange County fund the "Peter Pan Portfolio," remarking that it was based on the hope that interest rates would stay low forever, and "the idea, however mistaken, that 'ya gotta believe' things will work out."

Untold billions of dollars of working peoples' pensions, health plans — and now it turns out school districts — have been placed into the giant casino of the stock and bond markets.

Orange County treasurer Robert Citron, who managed the \$7.5 billion fund, borrowed an additional \$12 billion to buy a

wide variety of derivatives, complex financial instruments whose payoff is linked to — or derived from — the performance of bonds, currencies, or other assets. Derivatives are often an even riskier bet than regular stocks and bonds. The highly-leveraged fund was heavily into interest-sensitive securities.

When interest rates began to rise, so did the amount the Orange County fund had to pay on its borrowings. In the meantime, the interest the fund earns on many investments has stayed the same, while on others, including derivatives, it has sharply declined.

Citron resigned as the disaster unfolded. Adding to the problems, fund managers — even as losses were piling up — borrowed \$900 million in June and July by selling one-year taxable notes. The notes all must be repaid — by next summer.

Fund managers claim the value of securities in the fund will return to their old value — over several years. In the meantime, no interest will be earned, an item that some of the school districts have come to count on to make their budgets.

According to Art Becker, an official at Garden Grove school district, "There's a great deal of apprehension on the part of employees." The district's 1995 budget includes \$1.1 million in anticipated interest payments that it now won't see.

In addition, the fund refuses to let its customers withdraw money, since its securities aren't worth what they paid for them. So they notified customers that any with-



Wall Street traders. Stock market went into a frenzy at the news that Orange County had filed for bankruptcy. Losses by county will severely affect public-service funds.

drawal would carry a 20 percent penalty. The county said it had only \$450 million in cash after having to repay certain derivatives loans. Only a month earlier, the fund had \$2 billion in cash.

The water district has delayed withdrawing money from the fund. "If we withdrew funds now, it would have such an impact that it would cripple the school districts," said one official.

The Wall Street brokerage firm Merrill Lynch may also be in hot water over its role in the crash. It was the biggest seller of bonds to Citron, reaping nearly \$40 million in commissions over the past couple of years. Its stock fell by \$1.50 a share on the Orange County news. Merrill Lynch also might face lawsuits.

While the big business press has placed much of the blame on unsound investment strategies — extensive use of derivatives and betting on low interest rates — a number of the biggest Wall Street firms were

involved from beginning to end. These included Morgan Stanley, Dean Witter, and Nomura Securities International. Wall Street, in fact, precipitated the bankruptcy filing when CS First Boston and other anxious investment sharks seized securities in the Orange County fund, fearing losses.

This fiasco mirrors the widespread use of derivatives and all kinds of bets on the stock and bond markets. Stocks and bonds have no fixed value. They are only as valuable as the people who can afford to buy them think they are.

It turns out some county judges got in on the act. An undisclosed number of justices encouraged individuals who came before their courts to contribute settlement payments and inheritances into the fund.

"There have to be other Orange Counties out there," remarked a concerned Richard Fisher, chairman of Morgan Stanley & Co., one of the Wall Street brokers that lent money to the fund.

GM cuts deal to end recall of unsafe trucks

BY PAT SMITH

On December 2, U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Peña announced that the Clinton administration was dropping a two-year investigation of General Motors trucks. Peña also promised to end any effort to force the company to recall the vehicles.

Crash tests and statistics from federal accident reports showed the pickups' side-saddle gasoline tanks, located outside their steel frames, were prone to burst into flames after collisions from the side. There are indications that GM was aware of this when it built the vehicles. Some 150 people have been killed in fiery crashes that would otherwise not have been fatal. Some 5 million of the trucks remain in use.

In exchange for dropping the inquiry, the auto manufacturer agreed to pay \$51 million dollars over five years for public education programs advocating stiffer seat-belt and anti-drunk-driving laws; research on the effects of alcohol, drugs, and aging

on drivers; and the purchase of 200,000 child safety seats for low-income families.

The agreement will cost GM less than four ten-thousandths of a percent of their \$140 billion a year revenue, not counting tax breaks they might receive for supporting the research and so-called safety programs. In addition, the company can contribute "facilities, human resources, salaries, and other things," instead of cash.

Peña argued that the arrangement would save more lives than the faulty trucks would kill. "The settlement was a clear victory for GM, which escaped fighting a potentially embarrassing and costly court battle, and paying an estimated \$1 billion to recall and fix the trucks," the *New York Times* reported. "The Government's finding of a safety defect could also have been used to bolster about 50 lawsuits brought by victims' families against the nation's No. 1 automobile maker."

"For GM there isn't a downside," the *Wall Street Journal* said, noting that after Peña's announcement GM stock shot up a dollar per share on the New York Stock Exchange.

"The secret deal Secretary Peña cut with GM behind closed doors will let over 100 more people burn to death who could have been saved by a recall," said Clarence Dit-

low, director of the Center for Auto Safety. The group filed the original petition for recall two years ago. In October, the Transportation Department agreed to push to get the trucks recalled. GM "appears to have made a decision favoring sales over safety," Peña said at the time.

With the backing of Chrysler and Ford, General Motors filed a suit November 17 challenging the government's investigation of the trucks' safety and their possible recall. "I can't think of anything more irrational than Secretary Peña's decision [to continue the investigation]," Chrysler chairman Robert Eaton said in November.

In an unprecedented move, the chairmen of all three auto giants sent a letter to President Bill Clinton warning him against pursuing the recall. The GM suit claimed its trucks had met federal safety standards and challenged the right of the federal government to impose new standards retroactively.

General Motors turned down a request to voluntarily recall its trucks in April and rejected suggestions of ways to secure the pickups' gas tanks, like placing steel cages around them or rubber bladders inside. The company refused to authorize dealers to make such changes, arguing that the trucks were safe.

Pilot fired for questioning safety

BY SARA LOBMAN

American Eagle suspended pilot Steve Frederick December 6 after he questioned the safety of the airline's turboprop planes. Two weeks earlier, the airline instructed two pilots to seek counseling for refusing to fly the planes due to concerns about inclement weather.

Sixty-eight people were killed when one of American Eagle's ATR-72 turboprop planes crashed in October in Roselawn, Indiana. The National Transportation Safety Board said that ice on the aircraft's wings was a probable cause of the accident and suggested the planes be grounded in icy conditions until an investigation was completed. However, the Federal Aviation Administration rejected the recommendation and the company has continued to fly the planes.

American Eagle was forced to cancel more than a dozen ATR flights leaving Chicago's O'Hare Airport November 27 after pilots requested information about the weather they would encounter. Leaflets, whose authors claimed to be American Eagle pilots, were distributed at the airport a few days later warning passengers of the possible dangers of flying on the small planes. "The majority of us [pilots] will refuse to fly these aircraft until the icing

problems are fixed," the leaflet said. The airline's pilot association says it does not know who distributed the flyers.

On December 1 — less than a week before Frederick was suspended — the company announced it would not discipline pilots or flight attendants who worked for Simmons Airlines, one of the four carriers operating under the American Eagle banner, for refusing to fly ATR planes. Instead, the company said, they would be re-assigned.

The union representing American Eagle flight attendants has repeated its request that the company ground the planes.

The suspended pilot said that in the five years he has flown the turboprop planes for American Eagle, he has worried about their ability to handle icy weather safely.

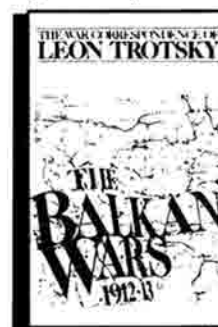
"I'm not afraid of going on the record," Frederick said. He noted that the official reason for his suspension — insubordination — was a lie and that it was really punishment for speaking out on safety. In addition to refusing to fly a plane he considered unsafe, Frederick had spoken to reporters at the *Chicago Tribune* about his concerns.

A company spokesman acknowledged that Frederick was suspended and was being investigated for misconduct, but would not give details.

THE TRUTH ABOUT YUGOSLAVIA Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention

George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis, and Jonathan Silberman

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Behind appeal of reactionary Prop. 187

BY MARTIN KOPPEL

Proposition 187 was approved by a solid 59 percent of California voters. Many have asked how this could happen given the reactionary nature of the measure, which, if implemented, will deny undocumented workers access to public education, health care, and social services.

Among voters who were white, according to a *Los Angeles Times* exit poll, 63 percent voted "yes" on 187.

Among those who were Black or Asian, a reported 47 percent of each voted "yes" and 53 percent "no." In California, the biggest Asian communities are Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese.

Twenty-three percent of Latinos voted "yes" and 77 percent voted "no." Most Latinos in the state are Chicano (Mexican-American), followed by Mexican and Central American immigrants.

The overwhelming "no" vote by Latinos, who were the main butt of the scapegoating campaign by pro-187 forces, is not surprising and doesn't reflect the full extent of Latino opposition to the measure. That opposition was graphically registered in Los Angeles by an October 16 march of 70,000 and walkouts by thousands of junior high and high school students protesting the measure.

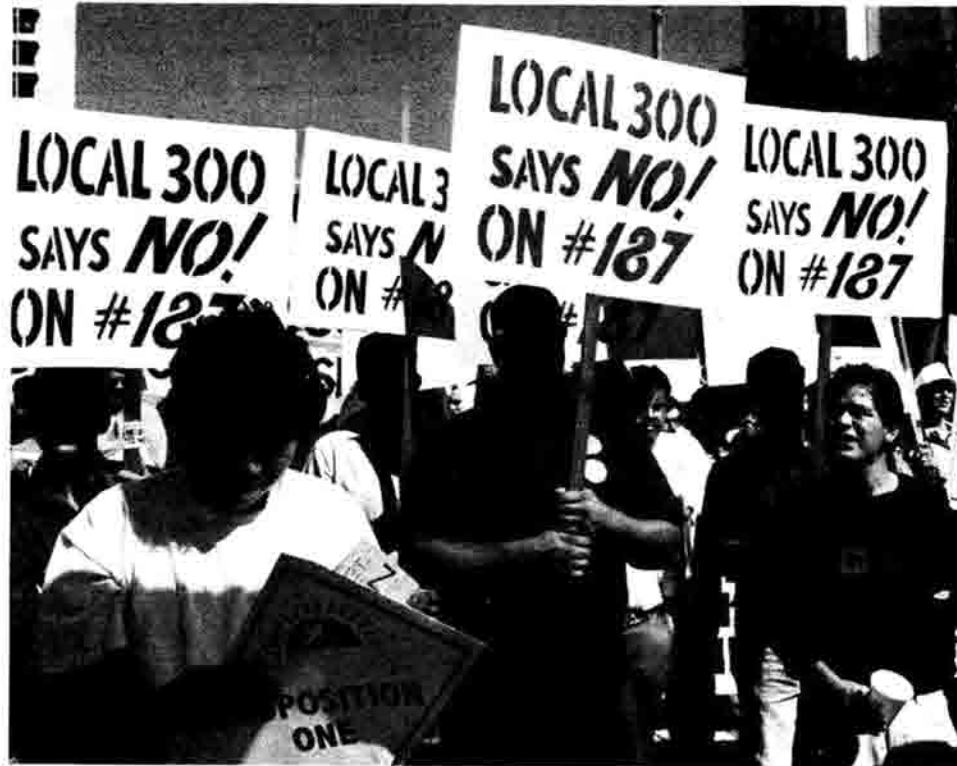
Some organizations in the Asian communities campaigned against 187 and a modest number participated in the October march.

But how to explain the 47 percent "yes" vote in both the Black and Asian communities and the 23 percent "yes" vote by Latinos?

For that matter, how to explain the almost two-thirds vote by whites in favor of this reactionary proposal?

How did workers vote?

To answer these questions, let's look at the most important figures: how did workers vote? According to exit polls, voters in favor of the initiative included 56 percent of those whose family income is under \$15,000; 63 percent of those earning \$15,000-30,000; 58 percent of those earning \$30,000-50,000; also 58 percent for voters earning \$50,000-75,000; 53 percent for those making \$75,000-100,000; and 60 percent of those with incomes above



October 16 march of 70,000 against Proposition 187 in Los Angeles. This demonstration and other mass protests had a positive impact on the thinking of many workers.

\$100,000.

In other words, voters of all social classes, including workers, voted by similar margins for Proposition 187.

Right-wing supporters of 187 have pointed to these figures to justify their immigrant-bashing campaign.

The fact that important sections of big business promoted this initiative reflects the rightward shift of the entire framework of capitalist politics, including Democrats and Republicans alike. It is in the interests of the wealthy to scapegoat immigrant workers and deflect attention from the real source of the economic crisis: the employers and their profit system. Even capitalist opponents of Proposition 187 argued for curbing the rights of undocumented workers.

Big layers of the middle classes, reacting with panic to the economic crisis and social breakdown, were especially susceptible to demagogic appeals to protect "our"

schools, jobs, and living standards.

This was true of many among the significant numbers of Blacks, Asians and Chicanos who now belong to the middle class.

In good measure, the pro-187 propaganda was tailored to convince middle-class voters that "illegal" immigrants are the root cause of their problems. The false argument was peddled that undocumented workers are responsible for high taxes because they send their children to public schools and use public medical facilities and other tax-funded social services.

A substantial number of professionals and small businesspeople — white, Black, Chicano, Mexican, and Asian — fell for

these reactionary arguments, as did a layer of better-paid workers with middle-class mentalities. "A lot of ethnic people are going to support this," gloated pro-187 campaigner Gil Wong, a first-generation Chinese American, before the elections. "How can anyone rationally support providing welfare to illegal immigrants?"

Thus, it is not surprising that all but a few organizations and prominent figures in the Black community refused to speak out against 187. Most of these middle-class politicians ducked the issue and some spoke out in favor of 187.

Workers were not immune from being taken in by this propaganda. Employers work overtime to foster divisions among working people, using the old divide-and-conquer strategy. Who's responsible for unemployment? Not American bosses, of course, but "foreign" workers, particularly "illegals." So the argument goes.

Given the pro-employer mentality of the top union officialdom and the absence of big labor struggles, which would make it clearer there are two classes with opposing interests — workers of all skin colors and languages versus bosses of all nationalities — many working people fall prey to these false arguments.

Appeal to 'Americans'

It is noteworthy that many working people, particularly Latinos, but also Blacks, Asians, and to a lesser extent whites, were repelled by the racist undertone of the immigrant-bashing propaganda. Many unions in California took a position against 187 and some built and took part in the October 16 march.

But the pro-187 forces did not wage an overtly racist campaign. Instead, they appealed to people — including workers — to identify as "Americans" against "them" — those who "steal American jobs" and jeopardize the future of "our" children in an increasingly insecure world.

Continued on Page 9

Tuberculosis rising among Native peoples in Canada

BY ROGER ANNIS

MONTREAL — Statistics Canada has released a shocking report showing that the rate of tuberculosis for Canada's 1 million Native Indians is more than 30 times the rate for non-Native people born in Canada.

For so-called status Indians, the rate is 43 times higher, double that of Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in Asia. "Status" Indians are those who are registered by the Canadian government as being of Native ancestry. They number half a million and most live on reserves.

"It's unbelievable, really," commented David Ross, executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development. He said the figures are a sign of the abominable living conditions of Native people on reserves, who are the poorest of the poor in Canada. Most reserves have chronic housing, water quality, and sewage treatment problems.

According to the Statistics Canada report, Canada's Native Indians suffered 60.8 cases of tuberculosis per 100,000 people in 1992. The rate was 81.3 for "status" Indians. The rate for the entire population of Canada was 7.4. It was 1.9 for non-Natives born in the country.

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease that destroys body tissue, most commonly the lungs. It can be cured by antibiotic treatment and usually prevented with sanitary living conditions and a healthy diet.

Tuberculosis should be thing of past

"If the task of meeting minimum human social needs were given the priority it deserves, then we would be living in a society where tuberculosis would be a thing of the past," commented Denise Avaré, executive director of the Canadian Institute of Child Health. The issues of housing, sewage

treatment, and water quality are a constant source of conflict between Native communities and the Canadian government. Under Canadian law, including Indian treaties, the federal government is responsible for providing proper housing and social services on Native reserves.

Last summer, one Native reserve in northern Manitoba abandoned its community after a renewed outbreak of water-borne diseases among children and other residents and took to the road on a 620-mile protest march to the provincial capital of Winnipeg. The outbreak was caused by a breakdown in the community's sewage treatment facility, which the government had been stalling for years to replace. After several days of marching, the community won a renewed commitment to carry out the necessary repairs.

Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin recently toured Native reserve communities across northern Ontario. One of the biggest criticisms and demands for action he received along the way concerned water quality and sewage treatment problems.

Earlier this year, Irwin and the government of Newfoundland cut off talks over land claims and self-government with the 500-person Innu Native community of Davis Inlet on the northern Labrador coast after residents kicked out the federal police and courts.

For years the Innu have been fighting for help in moving the community from an island to a mainland location. Among other reasons, the move is necessary in order to improve chronic water supply and sewage treatment problems.

Roger Annis is a member of Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada Local 841 in Montreal.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Michael Baumann

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes books and pamphlets by revolutionary leaders in the fight against capitalism and the oppression and exploitation it engenders and reinforces. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

The *Communist Manifesto*, the founding document of the modern revolutionary workers movement, reaches new readers in many different ways, including through the classroom.

A recent order for 225 copies came from a university in the San Francisco area, the product of a visit to the campus by local sales representatives. The *Communist Manifesto* in Spanish was also recently ordered for class adoption by a college in Iowa.

Far and away Pathfinder's best-selling pamphlet, 3,600 copies of the *Manifesto* were sold last year and more than 3,000 so far this year.

Other recent classroom adoptions include *The Second Declaration of Havana* at a school in Alabama, and *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara* at a university in Washington, D.C.

In visits to stores in Belgium earlier this year, sales representative Erik Wils found titles on Cuba were the best sellers, in particular the writings and speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara. More than a quarter of the 201 books and pamphlets he sold were titles by Guevara in French, English, and Spanish, including 11 copies of the new Pathfinder edition of *The Bolivian Diary*.

Books on Cuba were also in demand at the annual Claridad Festival, hosted in

mid-October by supporters of independence for Puerto Rico. Thirty-five books and pamphlets were sold this year, a majority on Cuba, Ron Richards reports from San Juan.

"There is a hunger in Puerto Rico for material about the Cuba revolution," Richards writes, but apart from titles published by Pathfinder the material is hard to find.

As a result, he said, in some cases "we are selling English-language books that are translated from Spanish to people who read Spanish better than English!"

When representative Dag Tirsén made a recent swing through Gothenburg, Sweden; and Oslo, Norway, he found "three outstanding sellers": *To Speak the Truth, Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*.

All stores that placed orders included these books, Tirsén reports. Total sales for the four-day trip this fall were 89 books and pamphlets, valued at more than \$1,500.

"With this book, you're rolling into Managua seated on the top of a tank," says the Belgian magazine *Amerika Revista* in its review of the recent issue of *New Internationalist*, "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution." It calls the special issue "an indispensable report from within" the revolution.

Pathfinder in Manchester, England, was among the stores highlighted in a special student issue of *City Life* magazine. "They stock a diverse range of radical books, pamphlets and periodicals, all relating to working peoples' struggles," *City Life* noted.

Employers fear political shocks in Mexico

Assassination sparks gov't infighting; working people bear brunt of restructuring

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

With the December 1 inauguration of Ernesto Zedillo as president of Mexico, capitalists there and in countries abroad are hopeful the new administration will assure a stable environment for profitable investment. They remain skittish, however, about new crises in the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and other unexpected political tremors.

In his inauguration speech Zedillo, as expected, pledged to follow the economic policies of his predecessor, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, along the lines of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The international big-business media especially applauded Zedillo's speech for promising "profound reform" of the judiciary and electoral systems and "peace" in the state of Chiapas.

"Reform of the political system is the most urgent task of Mr. Zedillo's six-year term," the British *Financial Times* advised. "It is needed because political shocks upset foreign investors."

The paper said such reforms were also necessary "to build public confidence" in discredited government institutions and quell rising social discontent caused by widespread poverty.

In addition to vowing a "fight against the poverty in which millions of Mexicans live," Zedillo was compelled to refer in his speech to a series of political crises in the last year that have shaken the 65-year-long rule of the PRI regime. He urged redoubled efforts to investigate the assassinations of two major political figures, the PRI's original presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, and PRI secretary-general José Ruiz Massieu.

Major downsizing

Businessmen, both native and foreign, have been salivating over their economic prospects in Mexico. The country's economy has grown by about 3 percent this year, and grew at a 4.5 percent annual rate in the third quarter — a big contrast with negative growth through much of 1993. Manufacturing exports are up 22 percent this year.

As NAFTA, which is being phased in over 10 years, eliminates thousands of trade tariffs that protected Mexican industry, heightened global competition is fueling a major industrial restructuring drive. Many factory owners have shut down unprofitable lines, eliminated production jobs, and slashed administrative personnel.

This has led to average increases in manufacturing productivity of 5 percent a year since the late 1980s, and a lot higher in some industries. Productivity rose by 42 percent in steel mills and 24 percent in telecommunications between 1985 and 1993.

With the implementation of NAFTA, U.S.-Mexico trade rose 17 percent in the first six months of 1994, to \$50 billion in exports and imports. Mexico continues to import far more than it exports, especially to the United States.

However, in spite of continuing privatization of state-owned industries — the national rail system is next on the government's chopping block — and cuts in social spending, Mexico's foreign debt, which had been cut back in recent years, vaulted from \$79 billion to an estimated \$113 in the last year.

Mexico's economic boom has enriched the country's billionaire families and benefited layers of the substantial class of professionals and small businessmen who are now eagerly buying hundreds of new U.S. products flooding the market, from Kellogg's Pop Tarts to the new Ford Mustang.

Less than minimum wage

Mexico, however, is far from joining the "First World" as Salinas had wishfully proclaimed a year ago. "Only about 12 million Mexicans have enough money to be considered active consumers" by advertising agencies, a *New York Times* financial report dryly noted. Mexico has a population of 90 million.

At least 60 percent of the active labor



Peasants demonstrating in Mexico City in April 1994 for land reform. Government measures are driving peasants off the land into the cities and factories. In southern state of Chiapas, land seizures and protests are continuing.

force in Mexico's countryside is paid less than the minimum wage of \$5 a day, peasant leader Federico Ovalle Vaquero told the Spanish news agency EFE in September.

The crisis in the countryside, including the privatization of communal lands and other government measures favoring capitalist farmers, is driving millions of rural toilers into the cities and the ranks of the unemployed.

Meanwhile, facing little pressure from labor struggles, officials of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) signed an agreement with the government and big businessmen in late September limiting wage increases to 4 percent a year. Further raises must be linked to increases in labor productivity, negotiated plant by plant. Wages of minimum-wage workers have lost 30 percent of their buying power since the first such agreement was introduced in 1987.

In spite of overall good economic news for the rich, capitalists remain jittery. When the government announced the latest increase in the gross domestic product November 17, the stock market tumbled 1.8 percent, partly on reports a senior banking official had been kidnapped.

"A year ago, investors were euphoric,"

Robert Pelosky of the Morgan Stanley investment firm told the *Washington Post*. "Today, investors are definitely not euphoric." The reason is "political instability more than economic uncertainty," the *Post* added.

No sooner had Mexico's big-business press begun to recover from its near-hysterical coverage of the guerrilla actions that erupted in Chiapas in January than PRI presidential candidate Colosio was fatally shot in March while campaigning. The PRI quickly substituted him with technocrat Zedillo, and a government investigation led to the conviction of the gunman. But these moves failed to dispel widespread rumors and speculation about conspiracies involving rival PRI factions or drug traffickers in the assassination.

Assassinations and PRI infighting

Zedillo went on to a smooth win in the August elections, with an anemic 17 percent showing by rival capitalist candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a former PRI governor of Michoacán who now heads the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Cárdenas's liberal program, backed by most left-wing parties, was barely distinguishable from that of the PRI candidate, except the PRD claimed to be

cleaner and for a "fairer" brand of capitalism.

Then came the assassination of José Ruiz Massieu, gunned down on a downtown Mexico City street September 28.

In a national scandal that has rocked the ruling party, Deputy Attorney General Mario Ruiz Massieu, who is in charge of investigating the murder and is the brother of the slain politician, charged that PRI leaders were involved in the killing. On national television, he accused PRI president Ignacio Pichardo and the new party secretary-general, María de los Angeles Moreno, of obstructing the investigation and protecting the assassins. The confessed murderer implicated a PRI congressman from Tamaulipas, who is being sought by police.

Meanwhile, land seizures and political unrest continue in Chiapas. Hundreds of peasants marched and stormed municipal offices in half a dozen towns in the southern state November 20. They were protesting the election of PRI candidate Eduardo Robledo as governor of the state, declaring that PRD contender Amado Avendaño had won the race. More demonstrations were planned for December 8, when Robledo, who won with a bare 50 percent of the vote, was to take office.

Wealthy ranchers and businessmen have countermobilized, including a November 19 march of 20,000 in San Cristóbal de las Casas in support of Robledo and "law and order." During peasant protest marches in early December, right-wing gunmen machine-gunned to death three leaders of the State Council of Indian and Peasant Organizations.

Twenty thousand federal troops in southern Chiapas continue to encircle the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), which launched spectacular armed actions in January and later reached a cease-fire and began talks — now broken down — with the government. The EZLN leadership, which backed the PRD in the elections, has focused its efforts on pressing the federal government to let PRD politician Avendaño take the governor's seat.

Adding fuel to the social fire in Mexico was the November 8 approval of the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California, which caused widespread outrage among working people south of the border. Several demonstrations protesting the measure took place in Mexico City after the U.S. elections. Zedillo and other politicians have also assailed Proposition 187.

AN APPEAL TO OUR READERS

Help the 'Militant' provide eyewitness coverage from Cuba and South Africa!

From now through the beginning of January, *Militant* reporting teams will bring you unmatched eyewitness coverage of political developments in Cuba and South Africa.

Our first reports began with a feature on the **World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba** held in Havana in opposition to Washington's economic embargo against Cuba. *New Internationalist* editor Mary-Alice Waters, *Militant* managing editor Argiris Malapanis, and correspondent Damon Tinnon covered this important event. *Militant* correspondents also stayed on in Cuba for another week to report on other political developments, which will be featured in upcoming issues.

Beginning this week, *Militant* reporter Laura Garza is in Cuba to cover a three-week tour of the island by Young Socialists from the United States. The Union of Young Communists are hosting Naomi Craine of New

York and Brian Taylor of Chicago, who will speak at factories and campuses throughout Cuba.

From December 17 to 21 our correspondents will cover the **49th national conference of the African National Congress** in Bloemfontein, South Africa. It is the ANC's first national policy-making conference since the April 1994 elections. Steve Clark, editor of *Nelson Mandela Speaks*, United Steelworkers member Greg McCartan, and *Militant* staff writer Greg Rosenberg will provide eyewitness reports on the gathering and spend another week covering developments in the class struggle there.

The cost of these trips exceeds \$25,000.

The *Militant* depends on the generous contributions of our readers — workers, students, and others — to make these trips possible. Please send your contribution today!



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Cuban youth march to back revolution

BY SUSAN SMYTHE

HAVANA, Cuba — Ten thousand chanting students walked down the streets of Old Havana November 27 in a march organized by the Federation of University Students (FEU).

"This demonstration is taking place on the 123rd anniversary of the assassination of eight medical students," said Yovanit Fajardo, a medical student at the University of Havana. "But it is above all an occasion to reaffirm our revolutionary determination." As part of this mobilization, many students had been involved in military training in the previous days.

Converging from eight different points in the city, demonstrators marched toward the monument for the eight students, which stands at the entrance of Havana Bay. The eight youths, executed in 1871, became martyrs in Cuba's independence struggle.

Students from medical and teacher training schools formed some of the main contingents. There were also students from other countries, including Brazil, North Korea, and South Africa.

Many students said that this annual demonstration has been bigger recently. "It is because of the hard conditions we have been through over the last five years," said

Yadira Miranda, a 17-year-old student who wants to become a teacher. "Students feel more the need to express their support for the revolution and strengthen the FEU."

At the end of the demonstration, students rushed to see the *Río Moa*, a fishing boat on which 82 students plan to retrace the trip from Mexico to Cuba that Fidel Castro and his companions made in 1956 aboard the *Granma* at the beginning of the revolution.

Many students spoke of the current challenges the Cuban revolution faces. "The Cubans who left the country in August didn't know what it is to live in the United States," said Lisandra Alcalá, referring to the 32,000 who left the island by raft. "They will find out soon, especially with things like Proposition 187."

Her friend Miranda mentioned with horror the first victim of this anti-immigrant proposal, a boy in California who died after his parents didn't take him to the hospital for fear of being deported.

Many marchers spoke with pride about the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba that had ended two days earlier. "We feel that we're not alone," said Danielis. "No other country could have done what we did in the last five years," concluded Alcalá.



Students in Havana pay tribute November 27 to eight students murdered in 1871, martyrs in Cuba's independence struggle. "It is above all an occasion to reaffirm our revolutionary determination," said Yovanit Fajardo, a medical student.

What's behind appeal of reactionary Proposition 187?

Continued from Page 7

"There's good support for 187 in the Mexican-American community and it should come as no surprise," Jesse Laguna told the *New York Times*. "An illegal Latino can very easily cost a Latino-American a job, and nobody understands that better than the American." This sentiment is even voiced by many immigrants themselves.

Does this mean that working people are becoming reactionary? No. It means that the big majority of working people in the United States, as in most countries, don't yet see society as class-divided. In the course of struggle, the vast majority of workers will come to see workers from other countries as fellow fighters and won't be so easily divided by the bosses.

The divisions based on color, nationality, and sex are weaker today than anytime in history. This, in fact, is why the pro-187 campaign could not be explicitly racist.

Even among many workers who favored Proposition 187, pro-immigrant rights actions like the October 16 march had a positive impact on their thinking.

Similar actions can help win over more working people and others to the fight to defend the rights of undocumented workers.

Meanwhile, a federal judge is slated to rule in mid-December on a motion barring implementation of 187 until the courts decide on its constitutionality. In the long run, however, mass action in the streets will prove far more decisive than the courts in deciding the fate of the anti-immigrant measure. Of special importance in achieving this is greater involvement by the unions.

One thing is for sure. The fight against Proposition 187 is far from over.

Harry Ring in Los Angeles contributed to this article.

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Socialist oil workers discuss response to capitalist social crisis

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

HOUSTON — Deadly explosions and fires, toxic gas releases, and environmental disasters are becoming more commonplace in the oil industry, reported Clive Turnbull at a recent meeting here of socialist oil and chemical workers.

Those in attendance, like Turnbull, were members of the Socialist Workers Party who work in oil refineries, chemical plants, and pharmaceutical factories in eight states. They belong to the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union (OCAW).

"Under the banner of 'restructuring and downsizing,' the oil companies have shut down more than 100 refineries in recent years," Turnbull noted. This retrenchment has had a particularly devastating impact on safety conditions at the remaining plants, as companies slash budgets for necessary maintenance of equipment. All components of the petrochemical industry are affected, Turnbull said.

One example is the massive fire in the Houston ship channel that occurred during recent flooding when four major pipe lines broke, spilling gasoline, diesel, and crude oil. The pipe lines were not adequately buried.

Man-made disasters, not accidents

"These are not accidents or acts of nature; they are man-made disasters caused by the drive for profits," said Turnbull.

Another example that socialist oil workers pointed to was a massive toxic release at the Unocal refinery in the San Francisco Bay area. Unocal ignored workers' attempts to arrange the repair of a small catalyst leak until the release had virtually blanketed the nearby town of Rodeo, California. This provoked protest meetings among residents in the area.

The socialist oil workers pointed to the importance of being involved in such actions. Oil and chemical workers, who suffer the greatest exposures to fire and hy-

drocarbon releases, have a strong stake in fighting the bosses' indifference.

Pat Nixon, a refinery worker at Chevron near Los Angeles, pointed to an article on the front page of the *Houston Chronicle*, entitled "Union Leaders Express Fears for Plant Safety." It quoted a letter from union officials to the manager of the giant Exxon refinery outside Houston protesting a plan to cut the monthly maintenance budget from \$15 million to \$5 million.

"There is too much critical work going undone, from cracks in the reactors to temporary patches on leaking acid lines and pumps with blown seals," stated the letter. "Each undone project, patch job and purposely neglected maintenance project puts another nail in the coffin of certainty which brings us closer to a major incident."

Rightward shift of politics

Turnbull used his report to dispute media claims that the Republican victory in the recent U.S. elections signified a political sea change.

"These elections," he said, "simply represented the continuing bipartisan shift to the right of bourgeois politics. They did not represent a growing rightist attitude among working people. Workers continue to bear the brunt of capitalist depression conditions and most saw no way out of the crisis other than to vote for someone different — or in big numbers not to vote at all."

According to Turnbull, the working class had no voice of its own in the elections. Important strikes such as the resistance being put up against union busting at Caterpillar, A.E. Staley, and Firestone are not of sufficient scope to present a clear working-class alternative to the capitalist offensive.

Nor does the Labor Party Advocates (LPA) offer a way forward, participants at the gathering agreed. LPA is an initiative backed by the OCAW officers and many



Gasoline fire east of Houston after improperly maintained pipeline ruptured in October. "Disasters like these are caused by the drive for profits," OCAW member Clive Turnbull said at recent meeting of socialist oil and chemical workers.

local union officials, which presents itself as an incipient labor party but, in reality, functions as a pressure group to influence the Democratic Party.

A discussion of LPA perspectives will take place at the Labor Educational Conference in Toledo, Ohio, December 10-11, sponsored, among others, by several locals of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. While socialist workers disagree with the perspectives put forward by the union officials organizing the conference, a number are planning to attend and take part in the discussion.

An exchange on labor political action is needed in the union movement, explained Willie Reid, a refinery worker from Houston. "Building support for the strikes at

Caterpillar, Bridgestone/Firestone, and the struggle at A.E. Staley can help advance the perspectives of the labor movement," she said. "Out of living battles like these the fight for independent working-class political action can emerge."

Socialist oil workers also plan to advance an international fighting program in discussions at the conference. Solidarity with workers from other countries and defense of Cuba against Washington's unremitting hostility are crucial campaigns for the labor movement in the United States, participants at the socialist oil workers' gathering pointed out.

Discussion on Proposition 187

Discussions about Proposition 187, workers reported, were intense in refinery control rooms. While many OCAW members opposed the proposed law, a majority — including many Black, Chicano, and Asian-American workers — supported it. A common argument was, "The country can only take so many immigrants; this has got to stop."

A refinery worker from California commented, "If anything, the discussions have intensified since [the elections], especially as more and more young people have taken to the streets to protest. Under the impact of these marches, it's clear some minds are changing."

The meeting also zeroed in on the growing opportunities to support the Cuban revolution. Participants decided to build the January 1995 youth brigade to Cuba and spring tour of Cuban youth leaders Kenia Serrano Puig and Rogelio Polanco.

Socialist oil workers also assessed the success of a national effort to sell the *Militant* and the Pathfinder book, *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End*. During the drive, 65 oil and chemical workers subscribed to the *Militant*, which offers weekly coverage of the Cuban revolution.

The November meeting voted to prioritize support for the Caterpillar and Firestone strikes, and for locked-out workers at Staley, in Decatur, Illinois.

An OCAW member from Utah described a successful speaking tour by strikers from all three embattled unions who came to Salt Lake City. Their invitation was initiated by an OCAW local.

Motivating involvement in these fights, Nixon proposed "reaching out to rank-and-file fighters in our areas. We need to get ourselves, along with groups of coworkers, to Decatur and Peoria, [Illinois], and other strike centers to lend active solidarity. And we need to work with others in our unions and communities to bring strikers from Caterpillar, Firestone, and locked-out Staley workers to speak in our cities. This can and should be done everywhere."

Jerry Freiwirth is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-367.

Defenders of imprisoned political activist launch drive to win letters for his release

BY RUTH NEBBIA

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has launched a drive to gain 250 new endorsers of the fight to win freedom for imprisoned political and union activist Mark Curtis.

Curtis was arrested and beaten by police in March 1988 for his participation in a public campaign to win freedom for 17 coworkers from Mexico and El Salvador who had been seized in an immigration raid on the Monfort meatpacking plant here. He was framed on charges of rape and burglary and has served six years in state prison on a 25-year sentence.

Earlier this year, while Curtis and his defense committee were preparing for a public campaign for his release on parole, prison authorities framed him on charges of assaulting another inmate. He was sentenced in September to 30 days in "the hole" and one year in lockup in a maximum-security segregation unit.

Hundreds sent messages

Hundreds of unionists and political activists sent letters and faxes supporting Curtis's appeal of his victimization and urging officials to drop the charges against Curtis and release him from lockup. The *Des Moines Register* reported, "Supporters of political activist Mark Curtis have swamped the Iowa State Penitentiary with about 500 letters protesting his recent assignment to a prison lock-up unit for allegedly punching another inmate."

"By placing Curtis in the hole, prison authorities aim to isolate him as much as possible from his fellow prisoners and others outside the prison gates to attempt to break him down and demoralize his supporters," the *Register* quoted defense committee members as saying.

In the letter to supporters of Curtis's

fight for justice, defense committee coordinator John Studer notes that the campaign to protest the attack on Curtis reached hundreds around the world.

He reports that messages protesting Curtis's victimization came from "Kgalema Motlanthe, the general-secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa; Michelle Vignola and Lisa Faruolo on behalf of the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee; Robert Verdier, president of the Commission on International Affairs of the Paris-based League for the Rights of Man; Andrés Gómez, editor of *Arelito* magazine and leader of the National Network on Cuba; and dozens of local union officials and leaders of political, church, and human rights organizations."

Strikers against Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone, and unionists locked out by A.E. Staley were among those who came to the defense of Curtis. Many youth getting involved in politics through the defense of abortion clinics, demonstrations against the U.S. government embargo of Cuba, and actions protesting anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California also sent messages.

While authorities did not reverse their action and Curtis has exhausted all his administrative appeals, attorneys William Kutmus and Jeanne Johnson will now take the fight to a state court by filing a civil petition asking for prison conviction relief, Studer reports. While noting that such legal challenges are difficult, Studer stated that for supporters of Curtis, "challenging the move by the prison authorities on every level possible is an important way to...keep their violations of his rights and bias against him public and will aid our continuing effort to publicize his fight and ultimately win his release. It also chal-

lenges restrictions on rights that affect not just Mark but all prisoners."

In the new drive to win 250 new endorsers of Curtis's fight between now and February, the defense committee has urged his supporters to introduce the case to fighters they meet at union and political activities. The letter cites the October 15 labor solidarity rally in Decatur, Illinois, and the November 12 march in solidarity with Cuba in Washington, D.C., as examples of events where Curtis's defense campaign attracted great interest and support.

Strikers and young fighters

Strike and political activities, campus tables, and farm conferences are all fruitful opportunities to meet potential endorsers and set up video showings, meetings, and discussions to win new forces to the long-term fight to win Curtis's release, Studer notes in his letter. He reports that numerous unionists around the country have set a target of organizing such an event with coworkers in the next month.

In addition to winning endorsers, the letter explains, funds must be raised to pay for the legal challenge to Curtis's victimization and for the political campaigns coordinated by the defense committee.

The committee is issuing an updated version of the informational flyer "Who Is Mark Curtis?" and a pamphlet entitled *Freedom and Justice for Mark Curtis*. Both will be available in English and Spanish, and efforts are under way to make them available in French as well.

Materials also include stickers and a documentary video produced by Hollywood director Nick Castle that outlines the case, with footage from Curtis's trial. They can all be ordered from the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, IA 50311.

Wave of strikes rolls across Australia

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia — An upsurge of strikes has rolled across this country in the past few weeks. Unionists from the trucking and airline industries, New South Wales teachers, construction workers, and food workers in a number of plants have taken action to defend their living standards and working conditions.

This small but significant wave of strikes takes place during an upturn in the business cycle, with 6.4 percent growth in the past year. This has resulted in fresh hiring in industry and a visible jump in company profits. As a result, official unemployment figures have dropped below the 10 percent mark of one million jobless workers for the first time in five years.

Combined with the national maritime labor dispute and national stoppages by coal miners that occurred earlier this year, this wave of struggles has partially reversed the prolonged trend of declining numbers of strikes. Last year saw the lowest number of strike days since World War II.

Leading the way in this round of strikes have been truck drivers who are members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU). The union has organized a series of work stoppages to demand "catch-up" wage increases after a pay freeze of more than five years. Aircraft refuelers and oil tanker drivers struck for 24 hours on November 28 to demand a 12 percent pay raise from their oil company employers.

The strike disrupted air travel across the country. A campaign of strikes demanding 15 percent raises has targeted big transport companies like TNT, Brambles, Mayne Nickless, and Linfox. Milk distribution companies, hit by stoppages of supplies before the summer holiday season, have already granted pay raises of 12 percent.

Pressure for wage raises

In recent years, many workers have gained small wage increases through a new "enterprise agreement" system. However, these increases have been tied to rises in productivity and tradeoffs on working conditions. Hundreds of thousands of workers — truck drivers included — in industries dominated by thousands of small employers have missed out on these wage increases. Under pressure from workers, TWU officials have criticized the enterprise agreement system in favor of negotiating nationwide wage agreements.

The Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union and the National Union of Workers are seeking similar pay increases. The Australian Services Union and the Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union are also seeking raises.

At a stop-work meeting on November 23, clerical workers at Qantas Airlines protested company restructuring moves that they fear will lead to redundancies (layoffs) and lower wages.

Teachers in New South Wales struck for 24 hours on the same day after holding some 250 mass meetings around the state. Up to 80 percent of the state's 60,000 school teachers did not attend work. Another stoppage is planned at the start of the new school year to demand pay raises. The state Liberal Party government threatened to retaliate by ceasing the automatic deduction of union dues from teachers' wages.

The truck drivers' demand of a 15 percent catch-up wage raise has caught the imagination of other workers who also face the grinding effects of depression conditions and the relentless employer push against incomes, jobs, and working conditions. Some of these strikes have been against speedup imposed during the employers' cost-cutting and downsizing moves. The Tooheys beer manufacturer, Kellogg, and Streets Ice Cream are some of the food companies where there have been stoppages in the past month over wage increases and against speed-up and other employer encroachments.

Previously, the union gains now under attack were codified in national or state legislation, known as the award system, which benefited the less unionized sections of workers. However, over the past several years, the federal Labor Party governments of Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating have used their links with the leaders of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to impose a class-collaborationist deal known as the Accord on the

union movement.

The capitalists rulers, through an unusual unanimity of the five top employer bodies, have now applied to the Federal government for radical changes in industrial legislation. These range from cutting back the award system to allowing employers to exclude unions from contract negotiations and giving the Industrial Relations Commission the power to order unions to end strikes, including sympathy strikes, by threatening massive fines.

The President of the Industrial Relations Commission has signaled that "while the award system will remain the safety net, it will need to change in response to changed industrial needs."

Leading the way in these new employer assaults on the union movement has been Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd., which locked out journalists at *The Advertiser* in Adelaide, South Australia, after they refused to sign individual contracts with no-strike clauses.

In recent weeks, big mining companies like CRA and Woodside have sought to

oust unions from those workplaces and by-pass industrial awards by putting workers on "individual contracts" where jobs go to the lowest bidder.

The Labor government has rushed to try to stem the strike wave. Prime Minister Keating and Industry Minister Laurie Brereton flew to Melbourne November 9 for an emergency meeting with ACTU officials. The government and top union officials reiterated their agreement on confining wage raises to productivity deals in order to keep Australian capitalism competitive "with our major trading partners."

Brereton also warned that the Labor government would be "quite pleased" to test out punitive measures against unions that broke the tangle of laws of the new enterprise bargaining system.

On December 6, ACTU president Martin Ferguson pledged union officials would try to avoid a "wages breakout."

Ron Poulsen is a member of the Food Preservers' Union at Streets Ice Cream in Sydney.

Canada refinery strikers appeal for solidarity

BY ROGER ANNIS

MONTREAL — Refinery workers on strike at Irving Oil in Saint John, New Brunswick, have been taking their appeal for solidarity across the province. Some 265 members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union have been out since May 12.

"We have a van plastered with the message of our strike and it's on the road constantly," union president Larry Washburn explained on November 21, while attending the union's national convention in Toronto. "We're traveling to other cities and towns to meet with local unions and ask for their support. We leaflet gas stations, shopping centers, and factory gates with our boycott appeal."

"The boycott has been effective. We're getting lots of support. I'm confident that we're keeping the pressure on the company and that it will eventually be forced to sit down and negotiate with us."

The Irving refinery is one of the largest in the country. The company also owns the largest chain of gas stations in Eastern Canada and has many stations in New England. The union is appealing to working people to boycott all Irving products.

"In December, we're going to take the campaign for the first time into other Atlantic provinces and into Maine," reports Washburn.

The union is leafleting at workplaces and gas stations every day in Saint John, a city of some 100,000 people. It has received tens of thousands of dollars of financial support from other unions. In addition, each striker receives \$200 weekly from the national union strike fund.

"The issues that forced us out on strike are still just as important. If we took a strike vote today, the result wouldn't be any different than it was in May," said Washburn.

The walkout was a major news story throughout Atlantic Canada in mid-October. For 10 days, air pollution from the

scab-operated refinery made breathing difficult for residents of nearby East Saint John. Many were forced out of their homes.

The company was operating the facility while vital pollution control equipment was shut down for repairs. The New Brunswick government department of the environment was thrown onto the hot seat when it was soon revealed that it had granted permission to the refinery to operate without the controls.

Joanne McMillan, one of many residents interviewed on television news reports during the ordeal, said, "I find the air pollution has been bad all summer. I've lived here five years and it's never been this bad."

Judy LeBlanc, another resident, held a press conference together with New Democratic Party leader and member of the provincial legislature Elizabeth Weir to denounce the government for giving permission to the refinery to operate without the pollution control equipment.

"The government should shut that refinery down or get the workers who know how to do the job back to work!" LeBlanc



September 10 rally of striking Irving Oil workers. Militant/Roger Annis

explained to the media.

Roger Annis is a member of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 841 in Montreal.

Protests against cutbacks in Canada build toward national day of actions

BY PATRICIA O'BEIRNE

MONTREAL — "Our response must be to unite in the streets. We must mobilize youth and trade union members to push back Ottawa's cutbacks," said Mathieu Jean, a Montreal student leader addressing a demonstration of 600 people against budget cuts here December 6.

Jean, a member of the student association at De Maisonneuve College and of the Action Coalition for the Advancement of the Student Condition, urged everyone to protest on January 25, as part of the National Day of Strike and Action called by the Canadian Federation of Students.

The January 25 actions are being called to protest drastic cuts in education and social services recently announced by the Canadian government. Ottawa is proposing to cut \$3 billion from post-secondary education and reduce benefits for those who have been unemployed three times in the last five years.

More than 10,000 youth marched in Ottawa November 16, uniting students from Quebec, Ontario, and the Maritimes to say no to cuts in education and social services.

Carlos Cornejo, another student at De Maisonneuve, described how 200 students had voted to strike for the afternoon to participate in the December 6 demonstration, despite the administration's refusal to cancel classes. As a result, classes had to be canceled anyway.

"The debate was very polarized," Cornejo said. "Some students argued that exams were more important and that we

should wait until January to protest, or that we should hold consultations with the government. Others explained that we must act now. Demonstrations are important because we must be united. The government wants to take advantage of these differences to divide us."

Protests have greeted the House of Commons Commission on the Reform of Social Programs in many cities that it has visited, including a protest of hundreds in Toronto. The Montreal action December 6 was backed by a number of unemployed, anti-poverty, and community organizations as well as student groups.

In Montreal, some 200 youth also occupied two government offices on November 30, followed by a spontaneous demonstration down one of the city's main streets. The students chanted, "Money for schools, not for monopolies!" Following the action, 50 people met to discuss the next steps in the fight against the cutbacks.

"We're opposed to the cuts because they will affect accessibility for lower-income students," said Bernie Froese-Germain, of the Canadian Federation of Students. "The government wants to shift the burden for financing education from the government to the students. The best way to get the government to stop these cuts is through these actions."

Patricia O'Beirne is a member of the Young Socialists and Local 581 of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union at Bionaire in Montreal.

TRADE UNIONS
IN THE EPOCH OF
IMPERIALIST DECAY

By Leon Trotsky

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By Jack Barnes

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THE CHANGING FACE OF U.S. POLITICS

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AND THE TRADE UNIONS

By Jack Barnes

Washington faces crisis over NATO, Bosnia war

Continued from front page

marks had "that old unpleasantness to it."

The CSCE summit also brought recriminations from Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic. "What shall be the result of the war in Bosnia which is now being prolonged due to a mixture of incapability, hesitation, and sometimes even ill will of the West?" he complained, lambasting Paris and London as "Serbia's protectors." Izetbegovic's regime has counted on Washington's military forces being thrown to its side in the war.

German chancellor Helmut Kohl called the meeting "a catastrophe."

The CSCE failed to reach agreement on any resolution condemning the Bosnia war. Bosnian officials rejected proposed declarations because they said these made no distinction between the Sarajevo regime and forces commanded by Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic and his allies, who now control 70 percent of Bosnia.

An eight-paragraph statement on the fighting in the Bosnian city of Bihac that condemned the Serb forces was rejected by Moscow, which maintains close ties to the Belgrade regime. On December 2 Moscow used its UN Security Council veto for only the second time since the 1991 coup in Russia to block a proposed tightening of the embargo against Serbia.

Adding to the diplomatic fiasco, Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze declared that "the very idea of the common European House is nearly dead and being consumed by the fires of numerous conflicts and wars."

The Contact Group, composed of representatives of the U.S., British, French, German, and Russian governments, has dusted off its old partition plan for Bosnia and is now trying to get the warring parties to accept it.

But both the Bosnian government and Karadzic's forces reject the Contact Group's plan. Under the existing proposal, which U.S. officials say is open to negotiation, Sarajevo would be given 51 percent of the territory that is now Bosnia, while Karadzic's forces would receive 49 percent—much less than they already control. Clinton, while publicly denying that he favors such a development, has sent unmistakable signals to Karadzic that Washington would not object to a federation hatched between the rightist Serb leaders in Bosnia and their counterparts in Belgrade.

Rightist forces from Croatia under the command of Milan Martić are meanwhile pressing their offensive on Bihac, a UN-designated "safe area" in northwestern Bosnia.

Rival gangs

Big-business commentators and capitalist politicians of all countries involved have painted the war tearing up the former Yugoslavia as an "ethnic conflict." They have pointed to the barbarous conduct of the rightist forces in league with Belgrade and their reactionary practice of "ethnic cleansing" to justify that claim.

The war, however, is not an ethnic one. Rival gangs of would-be capitalists are fighting to expand their turf and loot—whether under the banner of Serbian nationalism, Croatian nationalism, or other demagogic ploys.

A current development deflates the "ethnic" argument. Some 10,000 Muslim troops, led by Muslim businessman Fikret Abdic, are now waging an assault on Velika Kladusa in the northern section of the Bihac pocket, in alliance with rightist Serb forces in Bosnia and Croatia.

Abdic was the biggest chicken farmer in the former Yugoslavia. The magnate presided over the giant food processing enterprise Agrokomerc. After a brief tenure in the Bosnian government, he fell out with other officials and decided to chart a course that better suited his particular capitalist interests.

"We trust Fikret," said one Serb officer.

—CALENDAR—

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Young Socialists BBQ. Meet Eugen Lepou, recently attended World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba in Havana. Sun., Dec. 18, 4:30 p.m. Salads provided, bring your own meat. Phone/Fax: Nathan (03) 365-6055 for more information.

"He's a Muslim we can do business with. With him in charge we can forget about Bihac."

The rival interests of the imperialist powers in NATO, sharply accelerated by the demise of the Warsaw Pact military alliance, have produced the biggest public rift between them in many years.

'Cracks appearing in the alliance'

"Cracks are appearing in the cohesion of the alliance," wrote Baron Hermann von Richthofen, Bonn's ambassador to NATO, in a cable to his government. The *Financial Times* printed the letter in its December 2 issue.

Abandoning the usual diplomatic cadence, he wrote, "Relations between UN allies and Nato in the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict, already complicated and tense, have become definitely problematic as a result of national decisions of the U.S. in its capacity as the leading power in both organisations....The U.S. appears to want to force its way past hesitant alliance partners ('My way or no way.')

Richthofen stated that Washington's effort to include some Eastern European governments in NATO "is of such fundamental importance that we must avoid a rapid U.S. success turning into a Pyrrhic victory for the alliance."

Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, criticized Washington's NATO expansion plan as a "dangerous mistake."

Ongoing divisions have also been displayed on the ground. Ever since NATO warplanes bombed targets November 23,

French army general Bertrand de Lapresle, commander of UN forces in the Balkans, and British army general Michael Rose, commander of UN forces in Bosnia, have thwarted Washington's attempts to strike Serb anti-aircraft systems in Bosnia.

Rose and Lapresle argue that NATO attacks on missile batteries would expose their troops to retaliation from the Karadzic forces. Some 350 troops under the UN flag remain detained by Karadzic's troops.

The defiant commander of the Bosnian Serb army, Gen. Ratko Mladic, sent the UN commanders a truculent message that he would free the hostages as soon as NATO provided him details on its warplanes' flight paths.

Paris and London have criticized the Clinton administration for not putting U.S. troops on the ground in Bosnia. French foreign minister Alain Juppé told the National Assembly December 7 that France, which has 23,000 troops in Bosnia and Croatia, should not be criticized by "governments that want to give us lessons when they have not lifted a little finger to put even one man on the ground." The French government has accused Washington of secretly supplying arms to the Bosnian government. "This crisis has revealed the doubts we had all along that Europe's interests are not necessarily those of America," said Juppé.

U.S. Senate majority leader Robert Dole has repeated his call to bomb the forces linked to Belgrade "robustly," but cautioned that he was not suggesting sending U.S. ground troops to Bosnia.

On "Meet the Press" December 4 Gin-

grich suggested sending Gen. Colin Powell "to visit Belgrade and to visit the Bosnian Serb leadership and to say to them, 'If you launch a general offensive, we would reserve the right to use air power against every position you have, against every command and control center, against every position everywhere. We would reserve the right to take you apart, and we'd do it in three to five days, and we would paralyze your capacity to function as a society. And we're telling you to just back off and accept an armed truce.'" Gingrich then made his call to "do it like North Vietnam," a reference to Washington's infamous 1972 Christmas bombings of Hanoi.

Other U.S. government officials cautioned against such a course. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Gingrich's remarks represented a "war strategy" that would ultimately involve large numbers of troops. Two Senate Republicans, John McCain of Arizona and John Warner of Virginia, also disagreed with the Gingrich and Dole proposals.

"I don't believe in the efficacy of airstrikes unless you are willing to bomb in such a massive fashion that would incur significant civilian casualties," said McCain, a navy pilot during the Vietnam War. Air strikes, he said, are the most "antiseptic answer [but] alone will do nothing." He pointed out that "massive numbers of ground troops" would be necessary to be effective.

There is no consensus in the U.S. ruling class that it is ready to commit troops yet to the first European war in nearly 50 years.

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The 1994 Elections and the Deepening Anti-Working-Class Policies of the Democrats and Republicans. Panel discussion including representative of the Socialist Workers Campaign. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54 St. Donation \$3. Translation into French and Spanish. Tel (305) 756-1020.

IOWA

Des Moines

Labor's Stake in the Fight to Defend Immi-

grant Workers. Speaker: Ruth Nebbia, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation \$3. Translation into Spanish. Tel (515) 246-8249.

TEXAS

Houston

The 'Bell Curve' Controversy. A Working-Class Answer to the Myth of Racially Determined Intelligence. Speaker: Willie Mae Reid, Socialist Workers Party, member, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-367. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 6969 Gulf Freeway #250. In the Woodridge Plaza, Woodridge exit off I-45. Donation \$4. Tel: (713) 644-9066.

CANADA

Toronto

Bosnia Crisis and the Myth of Canadian 'Peacekeeping.' Speaker: Sylvie Charbin, member of International Association of Machinists Local 2113. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 827 Bloor St. West (between Christie and Ossington). Donation: \$4. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

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NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Anarchism and Socialism: Lessons from Revolutionary Struggles. Speaker: James Robb, Communist League. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Race, I.Q., and Politics: Does Genetics Determine Intelligence? Speaker: Colin Parker, Communist League. Sat., Jan. 7, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379 3075.

Christchurch

Perspectives for the Fight for Maori Rights. Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League and Young Socialists. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

Wellington

Free Mark Curtis. Speaker: Colin Parker, Communist League, recently visited Curtis in prison and will report on the latest frame up to keep him incarcerated and the campaign for his release. Parker also visited picket lines of striking Caterpillar, Bridgestone/Firestone, and Staley workers. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. Friends Meeting House, 7 Moncrieff St., Mt. Victoria.

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Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

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Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

Just don't know what's good for them — "Repeated surveys show that many people would rather die of almost anything than of radiation from a nuclear accident." — *The Financial Times*.



Harry Ring

Now will you stop worrying? — *The Financial Times* also reports that Britain's Health and Safety Executive "suggests that safety standards in future nuclear

plants should be set so that the risk to a member of the public is at least 10 times less than that of a traffic accident.

Routine checkup — Systematic torture of inmates was spotlighted at Greece's biggest prison. One prisoner, charged with assaulting a warden, was held on a bed for eight days, his legs chained together and his outstretched arms tied to the sides.

An official explained, "For preventive reasons he was immobilized for a few days so he could be examined."

Maybe there's a new 'truth in advertising' law — The Minneapolis cops dropped the "To Protect, To Serve" motto from

their new squad cars.

They just aren't safe to have around — New York cops in squad cars had more than 3,000 accidents last year, most of them while on routine patrol, with the largest number from running red lights.

More than 1,000 cops were injured (compared to 20 from gunfire). The report didn't say how many people were injured or killed by the pedal-happy cops.

Hurts them more than you — A survey found that workers' dissatisfaction with their jobs is at the highest point in two decades. Bell-South Telecommunications has a positive response. The company, which has chopped 5,000 workers

from its payroll and plans to double the number, has required its managers to read, *Healing the Wounds*, a self-help book on post-layoff trauma.

Getting their jollies — Researchers gathered a group of stressed-out company executives to test what children's toys they liked. Among the most popular, a Jibber Jabber doll. Shake it and wring its neck, and the doll gurgles and squeals.

Virtual helmet included — New, an exercycle hooked up to a color monitor. Pedal through rural landscapes with accompanying soft music and the sound of passing trucks in stereo.

With a \$7,495 price tag, the VR

Bike will be marketed mainly to health clubs. But some will be available retail.

But look at the quality of the product — It's estimated that a record \$800 million was dropped down the tube in the recent Congressional contests.

'Six to five you get to heaven' — The Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer, a 2,200-seat Catholic church on the Las Vegas gambling strip, welcomes casino chips in the collection plate and in the gift shop.

Also a \$5 donation to the church building fund gets you a souvenir chip bearing a likeness of Jesus. (We would recommend you not try to use these at the blackjack table.)

Canada troops testify on atrocities in Somalia

BY COLIN MCKAY

TORONTO — The Canadian government's attempt to cover up atrocities committed by its armed forces against Somalis during its 1993 occupation of Somalia continues to unravel.

Maj. Barry Armstrong, a doctor who commanded the surgical team of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, said that top military officers had ordered soldiers to destroy photos and other evidence that pointed to widespread brutalization of Somalis by the occupying force.

"I was told to destroy everything. And I was told to pass it on to my section. The order was direct and clear," Armstrong told the *Toronto Star*.

Armstrong examined the body of a young Somali who had been shot three times in the back at close range by a member of the Airborne. The pattern of the wounds led him to conclude that the young man had been shot in the back as he ran away or lay face down. No one has been charged in his death.

An 'execution'

Armstrong went to the Airborne's commanding officer to report the findings of the autopsy but was ignored. In a letter made public a few weeks later, Armstrong wrote to his wife that the shooting was an "execution."

Following Armstrong's latest public statements the Department of National Defense "leaked" a confidential report to the *Toronto Star* that accused Armstrong of conducting an incomplete field examination. The report stated that a second autopsy performed two months later contradicted his findings. However, the forensic pathologist who did the second autopsy acknowledged that Ahmed Arush's body was little more than a skeleton by the time he examined it. Armstrong told the *Star* that he feels the Department of National Defense leaked this report to try to discredit him.

Armstrong explained that even though military police were fully aware of the order to destroy evidence, none of these orders were made known during recent courts-martial around the torture and murder of another young Somali, Shidane Arone. The courts-martial convicted two soldiers but acquitted all officers of any wrongdoing. When the *Globe and Mail* recently tried to reach Armstrong he said he has been ordered by his commanding offi-

cer to give no further interviews.

Even more damning evidence has surfaced that confirms Armstrong's statements. A few days after the doctor had spoken out, Pvt. Kyle Brown, in interviews with the *Toronto Sun*, backed up Armstrong's claims. Brown was sentenced to five years in military prison for his role in the torture and murder of the young Somali.

"A unit medic showed up at our sports day and told me to relax because the medical officer was going to fix everything," Brown explained to the *Sun*. Arone's body was later disposed of without an autopsy.

'Turkey shoot'

Brown described how another soldier had confided in him that he had been part of a group of soldiers who had been ordered out on a mission specifically to shoot Somalis. The soldier also told Brown that he had been sworn to secrecy prior to being allowed to participate in the mission. The soldier described to Brown how they laid a trap for the Somalis. Brown described what unfolded as a "turkey shoot," where one Somali was killed and another was wounded.

"There was a volley of gunfire followed by yells and screams. Then I heard a Canadian shout, 'I got one.' A second volley was fired. There were more screams and someone else yelled, 'hey, I got one too,'" said Brown.

Brown felt the incidents that the army has attempted to blame on a "few bad apples" were not separate and incidental but part of the camp's daily operations.

"I had just returned from three weeks of leave and I could tell something drastic had changed in the unit's attitude toward the Somalis. There were shots and yells from the perimeter wire, but only a couple of us bothered to get up and take a look. What was going on can only be described as a turkey shoot," said Brown.

Under pressure to control the damage being done to Canada's pretense of being a peacemaker, the government announced that a public inquiry will be held to look into the widespread torture and killing by the Airborne in Somalia.

"It is certainly in our government's interest on behalf of the people to make sure that every question regarding these very unfortunate events is answered and laid to rest," said Defense Minister David Collette. The inquiry will not start before



U.S. soldier kicks Somali boy in Mogadishu. Canadian troops are testifying that such abuse was routine.

appeals arising from the courts-martial are heard, which could take some time. On the November 26 broadcast of CBC's "Newsworld," Collette ordered the top

military brass to make sure no other soldiers spoke to the media. He appealed to the soldiers to "have faith in the public inquiry."

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People

December 19, 1969

Overwhelming evidence that Illinois Black Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were murdered by the Chicago cops has prompted numerous organizations and public figures, representing a broad cross section of the population, to demand a public investigation of the killings.

Those who realize that the cops' version of the events on the night of Dec. 4 is an outright lie include individuals and organizations all the way from the Chicago Afro-American Patrolmen's Association, to state senators, the mayor of Hampton's home town, officials of the Americans for Democratic Action, the United Auto Workers, the Alliance for Labor Action, the NAACP, the American Civil Liberties Union, black and white newsmen, and hundreds of people who have visited the apartment in which the Panthers were murdered.

The thousands who turned out for memorial observances gave testimony to the deep anger of the black community and to the realization that the systematic campaign of extermination being waged against the Panthers is an attack on the entire black community, against anyone who is fighting to change this racist society.

Sensing the growing rage, and hoping to divert it, the Justice Department has announced it is considering an investigation into the Chicago slayings.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

December 16, 1944

Capitalist candidates for public office are notorious for making the most extravagant campaign promises in their bid for votes. The recent presidential campaign was no exception. [Franklin] Roosevelt and [Thomas] Dewey vied with each other in promising all things to all men.

The master demagogue in the White House has made and broken so many promises in his four campaigns he probably felt that one more whopper wouldn't make much difference. An so, in his Chicago speech last October, he topped anything Dewey had to offer by promising 60 million jobs "after the war." That figure is 5 million more than were employed during the peak of wartime production and 7 million more than are employed today. In the same speech, the fourth term candidate expounded his creed: "I believe in free enterprise — and always have. I believe in the profit system — and always have. I believe that private enterprise can give full employment to our people." In contrast to the labor skates and liberal muddleheads the "free enterprisers" themselves frankly dismiss Roosevelt's promise as so much campaign oratory. The December bulletin of the National City Bank asserts that the goal of 60 million jobs is a fantastic figure impossible of realization in the foreseeable future under the "free enterprise" system.

This Wall Street bank expresses alarm that: "Positive harm may be done by setting employment goals at higher figures than are sound or reasonable. Both business and the public may be misled."

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Imperialists in conflict

The bloody slaughter in the former Yugoslavia, in which working people are the victims, has produced a spiraling political crisis for the imperialist powers and the Moscow regime.

Officials of the U.S., British, French, German, and Russian governments have launched a series of scathing verbal attacks on one another while maneuvering for position on the ground. The NATO military alliance, which was already seeing more public displays of imperialist rivalries following the demise of the Warsaw Pact, is being visibly shaken. The already-tattered "special relationship" between Washington and London is being subjected to further damage.

Meanwhile, Washington faces its biggest crisis in relation to Moscow since the disintegration of the Stalinist regime in the former Soviet Union. The Clinton administration's attempt to strengthen NATO as a dagger against Russia has yielded a furious response from the Russian military and the Yeltsin government. U.S. policy has contributed to deepening misery for workers and farmers there upon which rightist demagogues are building a base.

Bourgeois scribblers and politicians are now pondering the failures of President Bill Clinton's "policy blunders" in Bosnia. But Washington's problem is that there are no reliable options it can pursue now that can clearly accomplish its aims in the Balkans and in NATO.

The vaunted coalition of imperialist firepower arrayed against Iraq in 1990-91 can never be put back together

again. The squabbling among NATO powers makes this clear. In a world marked by capitalist depression and ferocious market competition, the interests of Washington and its rivals increasingly diverge.

The brewing criticism by Republican members of Congress of Clinton's foreign policy doesn't change the fact that U.S. imperialism has no clear road ahead in Bosnia or Russia. The massive bombing runs suggested by Bob Dole, then Newt Gingrich, were proposed by Clinton long ago. But without ground troops to back up such raids, nothing would be settled. And there is no consensus among the U.S. rulers that they are prepared to pay the high and unpredictable cost of sending large numbers of U.S. troops into the first war in Europe in 50 years.

Workers and farmers in the former Yugoslavia have no friends among the imperialist warlords or the rival gangs in the Balkans. Above all, these fellow workers need time and political space to carve out a leadership that can act in their interests.

This is not without precedent. In the 1940s, workers and farmers throughout that country, irrespective of nationality, united to make a revolution that overthrew landlord and capitalist rule.

The war in the former Yugoslavia has the potential to spill over into a Balkans war. All the imperialist powers are trying to stake out their interests. Whatever options they ultimately choose, their system is headed toward dragging millions of workers into unceasing conflict.

Orange County disaster

When the bubble burst in Orange County, California, it sent tremors through the stock and bond markets. But this disaster is not only of concern to rich investors. It is one more sign of the cracks growing in the world capitalist order. Despite glowing reports from the White House and other government officials, the underlying shakiness of the world economy threatens an economic collapse with devastating consequences for working people.

The Orange County fiasco confirms what growing numbers of working people have suspected ever since the 1987 stock market crash — that the financial markets aren't just casinos for high rollers with money to burn walled off from the rest of the world. Wealthy investors are taking risks, but not primarily with their own money.

Huge amounts of workers' pensions, health-care plans, and other components of the social safety net have been thrown into a debt-loaded investment frenzy. The southern California events confirm that entire municipal budgets — complete with the services they are responsible for, water provisions, transportation, and school districts — are being mortgaged by the masters of finance capital in their search for higher returns. In Orange County, school systems and county utilities were compelled by law to place *entire budgets* into the fund.

The billionaire bond traders will make working people pay the price for their crash. Orange County officials are

already raising the prospect of immediate layoffs and other cuts. School officials are saying they may not be able to meet payrolls. Local governments may soon be joining the county in filing for bankruptcy.

Class-conscious workers today have the responsibility to prepare a movement that can defend the working-class and poor farmers from the devastation that capitalism will surely bring. The labor movement must champion the expansion of social security; extending affirmative action to raise the living conditions of the most oppressed in society and thereby help unify the entire working class for the battles ahead; call for an immediate shortening of the workweek with no cut in pay, and a sliding scale of wages and hours to spread around the work and help alleviate unemployment; and demand cancellation of the debt owed by semicolonial countries to the big banks.

Just as many workers and farmers in the United States are held hostage to mortgage payments and rising interest rates, literally hundreds of millions in the Third World have been turned into debt slaves by the imperialist banks to keep revenues coming in.

The capitalist rulers have no way out of the crisis they have prepared. The task before the working class today is to build a leadership that can challenge them for power and bring a halt to their drive toward fascism and war.

Capitalism puts profits first

Profits before human life. From the murderers in the Union Carbide board rooms to their counterparts at major corporations around the world, that's the rule the bosses live by under capitalism. Several incidents show this beyond any doubt:

- The gas leak at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, 10 years ago this month killed at least 7,000 people and injured hundreds of thousands more. The vast majority of casualties were poor working people living in the shanty towns surrounding the facility. The company called it an accident and sent five people to "investigate." To date, not a single Union Carbide official has been brought to trial. Most of the 300,000 victims of the leak are still awaiting payment of their claims.

- General Motors refused to recall its pickup trucks although upwards of 150 people have burned to death as a result of their design. And the Clinton administration has gone right along with them. In exchange for the right to keep their killer trucks on the road, GM will pay a measly \$51 million over five years to advocate stiffer drunk-driving laws and the like. In defense of the agreement, U.S. transportation secretary Federico Peña callously claimed it would save more lives than the trucks will kill.

- Four major oil pipe lines ruptured in the Houston ship channel in October, spilling gasoline, diesel, and crude oil into the water. The pipes had not been adequately buried. Earlier this year, toxic chemicals from a Unocal oil refinery blanketed Rodeo, California. The company had ignored workers' attempts to schedule repair of the leak.

- Eagle Airlines, with the approval of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), continues to fly their small commuter planes despite evidence that the aircraft are

prone to crash in icy weather. The company has suspended one pilot and sent two others for "counseling" after they questioned whether the planes were safe. Sixty-eight people were killed when an Eagle flight crashed in October.

- The FAA also offered USAir a helping hand. The sixth largest U.S. airline has averaged one major disaster a year for the last five years. In response, the government agency eased maintenance requirements. "When it comes to safety, we are well within the mean range, and better than some," claimed USAir chairman Seth Schofield.

Company officials, government spokespeople, and the big-business press call each of these disasters an "accident." But this is a lie. The lives and well-being of working people are simply considered disposable in the drive for greater corporate profits. Like the problems at GM, Eagle Airlines, Unocal, and USAir, the safety problems at Union Carbide were no secret. Workers had been complaining for years. In fact, the deadly chemical wasn't even necessary for production — it just made it more "efficient."

Capitalists and their governments cannot be counted on to put human needs before profits. This becomes even truer under today's depression conditions, as the owners of the mines, factories, airlines, and refineries scramble to protect their profit rates. Only a fighting working-class movement, based in the trade unions and independent from the rulers and their parties, can lead the fight to reorganize society to produce the things humanity needs without killing the producers. In the course of this fight, increasing numbers of working people will see the need to replace the employers' government with one of our own — a workers and farmers government.

Cuban youth host Young Socialists

Continued from front page

Villa Clara province, located in the center of the country.

In a meeting with about a dozen researchers and laboratory workers at Cuba's Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, a young Cuban asked, "Isn't it a problem for workers in the United States that there is so much immigration coming in and immigrants are a source of cheap labor?"

Taylor said bosses are always looking for a way to pay workers less, and they try to divide the working class to be able to get away with it. Today the employers have stepped up their anti-immigrant drive because the capitalist economic system is mired in a depression and the bosses and their politicians need to justify cutting back on wages and social services.

"Proposition 187 is an example of this," Taylor said. "But you also saw the response this anti-immigrant measure sparked with tens of thousands of high school students, workers, and others demonstrating against it. These are the people we are talking to about why this system has nothing to offer us, and why we have to organize a movement to get rid of it and replace it with a socialist society."

'There is a political crisis'

Alexis Mussachio, who works in the division of vaccines at the institute, asked how capitalism could come out of this economic crisis? "The capitalist system has had three great crises, he said. 'The first two were before World War I and World War II. It seems capitalism needs to do more than increase productivity in order to solve this one. This time there is also a political crisis.'"

The Young Socialists replied that there is no way for capitalism to solve this crisis any differently from how it did before, with mass destruction of capital and loss of life in wars. They pointed to greater competition between imperialist powers such as Japan, Germany, and the United States, with more tensions over trade and less agreement over what to do in places like Bosnia.

"There is a political crisis, and this is similar to what happened leading up to World War II. The economic crisis provoked a political crisis then too," Craine said.

She pointed to the rise of right-wing movements in countries from Italy to Britain, noting we will see more of this. But workers will also resist, and in the course of these fights to defend their political freedoms, and their standard of living there will be a chance for socialists to play a role in constructing a powerful working-class movement.

The average age of those working in the biotechnology center is 28, and they told the young socialists they work 12-14 hours a day in a collective effort to help solve some of Cuba's most pressing problems. They are involved in research to aid in increasing the size of animals raised for food, as well as producing vaccines like the one they developed for Hepatitis B.

Student roundtable

At the University of Havana, dozens of students joined a roundtable discussion with the two young socialists from the United States. One young woman described how conditions had changed the lives of students during what is called the special period, which refers to measures being taken to deal with the consequences of the drastic drop in trade that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"We have problems getting books, pens, pencils," the student reported. "It's more difficult to get to school, there is less transportation. Blackouts and water shortages make it hard to keep clothes clean." But, she said, everyone is provided for, even though there may not be much to go around, unlike some countries where a few are rich while others starve.

A rapid exchange among the Cuban youth took place in response to a question about prostitution, which has reappeared in Cuba as economic difficulties have mounted during the special period. Hands shot up and students raised a variety of views.

One young man said that while he did not think it was right, he understood some women, maybe single women with kids, have a hard time making ends meet and prostitution is an easy way to get goods that are hard to obtain otherwise. "I don't agree, but I don't condemn them," he said.

"It's not just necessity that makes them do this," another student replied. "I know some who do it who don't face a hard economic situation, while others I know are worse off and don't resort to this."

The students then turned to asking the visiting socialists questions. How do the elections work in the United States? What will happen with U.S. policy towards Cuba? What about the attitudes of Cubans in the United States? Is there any difference between the policy of the Democrats and Republicans toward Cuba?

Many gathered around a photo album that Craine and Taylor brought showing pictures of demonstrations against Proposition 187, union picket lines, and socialists participating in election campaigns.

The tour of the two young socialists will continue through December 24.

Unionists march to defend Canada mill workers

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or

bleeding along the way."

New Democratic Party cabinet ministers Elizabeth Cull and Glen Clark have denounced the boycott. NDP premier Michael Harcourt, who addressed the convention shortly before the boycott was adopted, has refused to endorse or condemn it.

During the discussion on the resolution some delegates spoke to the importance of maintaining the picket line in Port Alberni despite

ON THE PICKET LINE

other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Some 3,000 trade unionists took to the streets in Vancouver, British Columbia, November 30 to support the fight against Macmillan Bloedel's decision to begin open-shop construction at its mills. For more than two months members of the British Columbia and Yukon Building Trades Council have been on the picket line in Port Alberni opposing the giant forest company's hiring of TNL Construction. Workers at TNL are members of an employer-dominated union.

They were joined on the picket line November 10 by 800 members of the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) who work at the mill. CEP members explain that their jobs as janitors, yard workers, steamfitters, and all other maintenance people will be contracted out if Macmillan Bloedel succeeds in establishing an open shop.

A substantial proportion of demonstrators who marched to the Macmillan Bloedel's corporate headquarters November 30 came from the convention of the British Columbia Federation of Labor (BCFL). They were joined by hundreds of construction workers in their work clothes and members of other unions.

The day before the rally the 900 delegates at the BCFL convention adopted an emergency resolution calling for a consumer boycott of Macmillan Bloedel products.

"We are telling customers, 'don't buy this product,'" said International Woodworkers of America-Canada (IWA) president Gerry Stoney. "Eventually that will put us out of work. But before that happens MB will do a lot of

a November 23 Labor Relations Board (LRB) ruling that members of the CEP and building trades workers must clear the entrance to the construction site. After a November 24 confrontation on the picket line in which one TNL worker was injured and one picket arrested, Macmillan Bloedel closed the site for two weeks. More than 65 workers and their supporters have been arrested to date. TNL has applied to British Columbia's Supreme Court for a "zone of safety" of 1,000 feet around the construction site.

Rail workers in St. Louis prepare for contract fight

Fifty rail workers and supporters rallied in downtown St. Louis November 25 to prepare for the January 1 expiration of their contract. Members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE), United Transportation Union, and Transportation Communications International Union came from several carriers, including Norfolk Southern, Burlington Northern, and Terminal Railroad.

The gathering was called by the newly formed St. Louis Rail Labor Coalition for a show of unity leading up to negotiations.

Unionists from a number of crafts at Norfolk Southern had recently organized a "red shirt" day, a BMWE member reported. Ninety percent of the workers wore red shirts on the job that day as a sign of unity.

The only way to begin to win back what workers have lost over recent years, Mike Griffin, a locked-out Staley worker from Decatur, Illinois, told the rail workers, "is to stand up and fight."

Paul Swanson, a BMWE official from Denver, said the union



Rail workers from several crafts rallied in St. Louis November 25 to prepare for upcoming contract negotiations. Representatives of the United Transportation Union, the Transportation Communications Union, and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees spoke as well as locked-out Staley worker.

planned to target one carrier at a time to avoid government intervention.

Candy workers protest layoffs, vote to strike

Some 50 workers from Brach's candy manufacturer protested the annual Thanksgiving Day parade sponsored by the company in downtown Chicago. Earlier that day, a meeting of 1,000 members of Teamsters Local 738 voted by a 2-1 margin to authorize a strike against the company.

The workers are fighting against the company's reduction in the workforce, which has been slashed from 4,000 to 1,700 over the past few years.

When asked if Brach's planned to shut the plant down, one worker replied, "The company hasn't said anything. They just keep downsizing. So far they have shut down 14 production lines."

The police cordoned off the unionists, making it difficult for passersby to show their solidarity. A group of locked-out A.E. Staley workers from Decatur, Illinois, demonstrated their support for the protesters.

A Brach's worker reported that more than 800 workers had signed a petition demanding the candy

company stop buying its syrup from Staley.

American Eagle flight attendants protest

American Eagle flight attendants and their supporters walked an informational picket line at Chicago's O'Hare Airport November 18. The bosses "have been pushing on us since the end of the American Airlines strike" in 1993, said a member of the Association of Flight Attendants. American Eagle attendants are the lowest paid in the airline industry and most have not received a pay raise in four years.

The majority of pickets wore lime green T-shirts emblazoned with the letters "CHAOS," a reference to their campaign of protests, including a possible walkout near the Christmas holiday, if contract negotiations are unsuccessful.

Talks for a new agreement began in October 1993 and the two sides have been in mediation since March. The AFA has requested a 30-day cooling-off period be instituted.

Steelworkers resist 12-hour work schedules

Members of United Steelwork-

ers of America Local 2729 in Mississauga, Ontario, met November 19 to express their opposition to work-rule and schedule changes at the Indalex aluminum extrusion plant.

The company has been pushing to change the current three-shift, five-day-a-week schedule to a continuous operation involving 7-day-a-week operation and 12-hour shifts. Indalex bosses say they cannot keep up with current orders if the changes are not made. Scheduling, wages, and the duration of the contract are the main points of contention between the union and the company.

The well-attended union meeting overwhelmingly urged the bargaining committee to resist proposals to lengthen the work day and workweek. Many workers felt that the company should simply add new machines and hire more workers if production needed to be boosted.

The following people contributed to this week's column: Bev Bernardo in Vancouver, British Columbia; Becky Ellis, member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in St. Louis; and Dave Lee, member of International Association of Machinists Local 1487 in Chicago.

LETTERS

'Great source of the truth'

I've been a respected reader of the *Militant* for six months. My subscription ends in a month, and due to [prison authorities'] attacks on my economics, I won't be able to finance my renewed subscription.

I would like the *Militant* to renew my subscription and allow me to pay the bill within a six-month period as I work through this crisis.

I would appreciate it because without the *Militant* I will be without the greatest source of information of truth and facts in the world! A prisoner
Crescent City, California

Opposes GATT

While reading through the *Militant* last week, I noticed that your stand on GATT is sort of noncommittal, you neither oppose nor support it.

I oppose GATT and the New World Order of democratic bourgeois governments that has no place for socialism. The Communist Party also opposes GATT and NAFTA. Your stand on NAFTA

was not a progressive stand.

Businesses moving to Mexico to get cheaper labor there are no help to either Mexican or American workers. Both are exploited in this attempt to keep workers' wages down.

The U.S. government is so exploitive of "illegal aliens" who work in the United States, while American corporations are going to Mexico and exploiting the workers there.

Since labor creates all wealth, the exploited are scapegoats for the U.S. corporations, while these same companies are getting rich off their labor.

Gary McIntire
Conover, Ohio

Unionists fight harassment

Recently the members of the Machinists' union at Rolls Royce's Montreal airplane engine repair plant pushed back a company attack through their collective action.

Two managers opened the door to the women's washroom/ changing room and stuck their heads in while a female shop steward was



reviewing her notes in preparation for the monthly stewards' meeting, which was about to begin. "She's smoking and she's reading," the bosses shouted.

The unionist went immediately to personnel and demanded a written and verbal apology from the two managers. Many male co-

workers were outraged and noted that if a male union member had done the same thing he would have been suspended immediately, if not fired.

While meetings between representatives of the company and the union went nowhere, some women union members began circulating

a petition outlining what had happened and demanding that the company take action against the managers and establish a policy to prevent any recurrence of such incidents.

Petitions with 280 signatures were turned into the company and a written apology and promise that such actions would not be repeated soon followed.

"Both managers accept that their action was unacceptable," the company letter stated.

Jim Upton
Montreal, Canada

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Canada gold miner fights frame-up

Roger Warren takes the stand to refute company, cop antiunion campaign

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN
AND SUSAN BERMAN

YELLOWKNIFE, Northwest Territories — Framed-up miner Roger Warren took the stand November 29 and firmly responded "No, I did not," when asked if he had anything to do with the Sept. 18, 1992, blast at the Giant Mine that killed nine people. The courtroom was packed for Warren's testimony.

Warren, a 50-year-old gold miner at Royal Oak Company's Giant Mine, is charged with murder in the deaths of nine replacement workers killed when a man-car exploded at the mine. The blast took place during an 18-month strike by Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers Local 4 (now Canadian Auto Workers Local 2304). The union went on strike to fight attempts by Royal Oak owner Peggy Witte to slash safety on the job and weaken union seniority.

In five weeks of presenting "evidence," the prosecution failed to come up with one shred of concrete proof that Warren was responsible for the explosion. The only physical evidence presented by government attorneys were boot tracks leading into the mine. Warren owned a similar pair of boots. However, during cross-examination, Sgt. Wayne Locke admitted Warren's boots, size 10, could not have left the size 11 boot print.

Orchestrated campaign

What has come to light in the trial is a massive company-inspired police operation backed by the courts and capitalist media to break the strike. This included the use of strikebreakers who were brought in the second day of the union walkout.

Warren was asked his opinion of replacement workers. He explained he wasn't angry at them. "My anger was at the powers that be," Warren explained. He cited a number of government officials he felt were responsible for the orchestrated campaign against the union that made some workers willing to cross the picket line.

During the walkout, hundreds of criminal charges were laid against strikers and supporters. Dozens of union members were banned from the picket line. Injunctions limited picketing to five people per gate.

The company used Pinkerton thugs and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) riot troops against the strikers. A rally at the mine entrance June 14, 1992, resulted



Royal Canadian Mounted Police riot squad marches into Royal Oak gold mine during strike, June 1992. Cops attacked strikers with tear gas and fired weapons into the air. Police investigators badgered miners they questioned about deaths of nine scabs.

in a melee after Pinkertons provoked the crowd. Fifty RCMP troops used tear gas against the strikers and discharged weapons in the air. Several strikers and supporters were injured. Eighteen people were charged with rioting, including Roger Warren.

A territorial judge dropped the riot charges against seven of the miners. However, in a rare move, federal justice officials in Ottawa reinstated the charges, including against Warren. "The full force of the state was coming down on us," he explained.

Police terror steps up after blast

After the Sept. 18, 1992 blast, the company and the RCMP immediately announced that the explosion was deliberately set and pointed a finger at the union.

Warren described the tremendous police pressure that came down on strikers in the 13 months that followed. "It was the worst thing that ever happened...Right away it was accusations against the union," he said.

The RCMP set up a special murder investigation task force. More than 400 miners, their families, and supporters were interrogated, many several times. Tim Bettger, who faces other frame-up charges stemming from the strike, had cops enter his house at gun point and search it for 11 hours. Bettger's teen-age son was told by the RCMP his father was a murderer and his mother was a liar.

The RCMP tried to get miners and their families to serve as informants and snitch on fellow strikers.

Warren was interrogated 12 times during the course of the 13-month police investigation. "The union approach was to cooperate with the investigation," the framed miner said. But "there were reports coming back of pretty aggressive interviews and some guys were pressured." Warren explained, "I was starting to have a bad attitude toward authority. I didn't hold them in high esteem as I had previously."

False confession

On the witness stand, he described being badgered repeatedly by cops. Many of his interviews with police were covertly taped. RCMP investigators insisted that he would remain suspect unless he could produce an alibi; explain why his boots matched the bootprints in the mine; and why his clothes were wet on the morning of September 18, which would be consistent with someone being inside the mine.

Warren explained on the stand what he had been telling the RCMP for more than a year. He had spent most of the night of September 17 walking around from picket gate to picket gate. The one thing he kept from the police is that in his wanderings he had gone onto mine property near the 138 portal. He described the route he took in detail to the jury. Further witnesses will be called by the defense to corroborate his description of his activities for nearly the entire night.

Warren testified that fear about losing his job prompted him to lie to the police. He knew if the cops found out he was on mine property, with riot charges still hanging over him, he would face new charges and be immediately fired by Royal Oak. Warren said that at his age it would be hard to get another mining job. He also thought he would be blackballed in the industry.

The framed miner explained to the court that he told police he saw two men in cam-

ouflage, one with an assault rifle, outside the 138 portal the night before the blast. He suggested these men could have been involved. He even helped the cops put together a composite sketch of the one he had seen most clearly. Police never seemed to follow through with investigating the lead he gave them, however. The cops centered their investigation on union members. In particular, they told Warren and others they suspected strikers Al Shearing and Tim Bettger. Warren confirmed on the stand that Bettger and Shearing were not the men he saw at the portal that night.

The police investigation bore down heavily on the strikers. The cops tried to sow suspicion among strikers to undercut union solidarity. Warren said the more he cooperated with the police, the more they harassed him.

In addition to the police harassment, bearing down on Warren was the fact that there seemed to be no end in sight to the strike. Two days before Warren's confession, Royal Oak's owner publicly announced there would be no negotiations with the union until an arrest was made in the explosion.

Under these pressures, in the sixth hour of Warren's 12th interrogation, he falsely confessed to setting the blast.

'Edmonton Journal' article

The framed miner used a story called "Footsteps of a Murderer" that appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* on the anniversary of the explosion as the outline of his false confession. The story laid out a detailed crime lab scenario on how the blast was set. It included a map of the mine and the blast site. The RCMP later admitted it had helped correct the facts in the article before it went to print.

Warren knew there were big holes in his "confession." He didn't believe the story would stick, but hoped it would last long enough for the strike to be settled. The strike was, in fact, settled several weeks later.

One of the weakest aspects of the cop scenario of the bombing is Warren's physical ability to have carried out what they accuse him of doing. He has a heart condition that places severe limits on his physical endurance. The night the RCMP did a videotaped reenactment of Warren's alleged route underground, he was physically unable to complete the almost two-mile trek.

Many miners believe the explosion was an accident caused by unsafe work practices in the mine. Some believe it was set by Pinkertons to frame-up the union. Trying to win his confidence during the first interrogation, RCMP agent Nancy Defer told Warren that they considered the possibility that the Pinkertons set the blast.

Big stakes for labor movement

The employers in Canada are using Warren's trial to smear unions and strikes as violent. They hope to intimidate union fighters from standing up for their rights for fear of being framed up.

What comes through as Warren testifies is that he is a working-class fighter with deep compassion for his fellow workers. Like other strikers, he was being ground down by the cop and company campaign to destroy the union. He saw the confession as a way out.

Warren has worked as a miner since 1965. In 1987, he was the first person to arrive on the scene of a blast that killed one miner and blinded another. He risked his life to save the second miner. That explosion had such a big impact on him that he quit mining temporarily. He returned to the Giant Mine in April 1988.

Funds and messages of support can be sent to the Warren Fund, c/o CAW Local 2304, P.O. Box 1628, Yellowknife, NWT, X1A 2P2.

Autoworkers in Montreal raise funds for defense effort

BY ROSEMARY RAY

MONTREAL — As the frame-up trial of Roger Warren continues in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, members of the Canadian Auto Workers union at the Chrysler auto parts depot in Montreal collected \$80 for his defense fund.

Christian, a union steward on the night shift at Chrysler, donated to the collection because Warren "is innocent until proven guilty."

Richard Leblanc threw in \$10 saying, "You just have to look at [Royal Oak Mines owner] Peggy Witte's union-busting history in the United States to know that Warren is innocent."

Many union members have been able to see through the media campaign against the framed-up unionist. However, it has clearly had an impact on a number of workers and some at the plant have decided not to contribute to Warren's defense.

When Warren's so-called confession hit the news, Andy, a night-shift janitor, expressed reservations about having anything

to do with the fund appeal. "What if we support him and he's really guilty? Wouldn't that give our union a real black eye?" he asked. But after seeing a television program about a long strike of aluminum workers in Ravenswood, West Virginia, where the cops and the company conspired to break the union, Andy changed his mind about the Warren case.

"After I saw what they did to the guys in Ravenswood, I'm convinced Warren is being framed-up," Andy said. He borrowed \$10 from a coworker and put it in the collection.

Lynne Murphy, who loads trucks in the shipping dock, immediately donated and said, "It's a total frame-up. There's nothing else to say."

"I know Warren is innocent," said Bob Mitchell, a dispatcher who said he would contribute next pay day. "Cops are pros at getting phony confessions out of people."

Rosemary Ray is a member of Canadian Auto Workers Local 1900 at Chrysler in Montreal.